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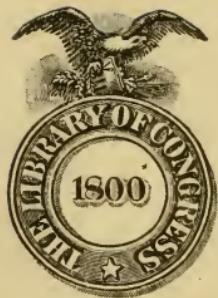
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The Traveller and the Deserted Village
The Cotter's Saturday Night
Elegy in a Country Churchyard



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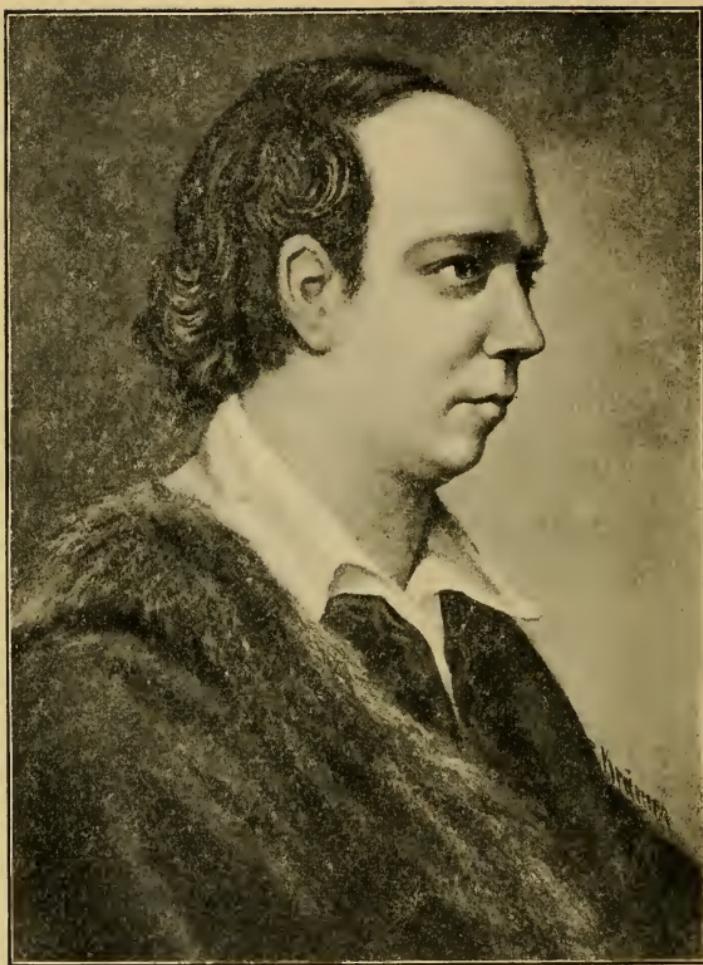
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OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

The Silver Series of English and American Classics

GOLDSMITH'S

THE TRAVELLER

AND

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

FREDERICK TUPPER, JR., PH.D.

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UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

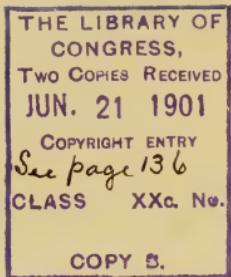


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ELIJAH

1900

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE two poems here annotated passed through many early editions. "The Traveller" was three times published within a twelvemonth after its first appearance in December, 1764; it was issued for the fifth time in 1768, for the sixth in 1770, and in 1774, the year of Goldsmith's death, the ninth edition was given to the world. This last—the text of Mitford and Dobson—I have made the groundwork of the present edition, collating it with the best modern texts, solely with a view to accuracy in punctuation and forms of spelling, as about the *words* of the poem there is now no question. In my notes I have given many readings of the earliest versions (the first, third, and fourth have been accessible to me in the Harvard Library), believing that the revisions of the poet furnish a suggestive study in literary craftsmanship. Of the five editions of "The Deserted Village" appearing between May 26 and August 16, 1770, I have chosen the fourth—also the Mitford and Dobson text. In this case, I have taken earlier readings second-hand through recent editors, as I have before me none of the oldest texts; but the changes that the lines of "The Deserted Village" underwent at Goldsmith's hands are not nearly so numerous and noteworthy as those in "The Traveller."

In the Notes I have endeavored to remove difficulties

of word and phrase and to explain all references in the least obscure; to mark the growth of passages from the rough by citations either of an earlier reading or of a corresponding thought in the author's prose; to illustrate the thought by parallels from other writers or by incidents from the life of Goldsmith himself. I have not hesitated to draw from annotations of other editors—notably from those of Prior, Mitford, Hales ("Longer English Poems"), Rolfe, Dobson, and Pancoast ("Standard English Poems")—but never, I trust, without full acknowledgment.

(F. T., JR.)

INTRODUCTION.

IT has long been the habit of critics to couple the epithet “poor” with certain great names. Indeed, this use of the word is a suggestive study. No one so characterizes the very first of writers, however unhappy their lives. Awe restrains us when we speak of Dante in his exile, Milton in his blindness, and Spenser in his dying hour of grief and bitterness. We do not apply the epithet to men of strong natures and savage manners, who, born in poverty and nursed by suffering, took the world by the throat and forced from it sustenance and honor; respect, mingled with something like fear, checks us when we speak of the imbecile Swift and the indigent Johnson. But when we tell the story of those authors who, towering above other men in talents, were yet forced by human frailties and errors to drink deeply of the cup of common sorrows, sympathy with the man gets the better of admiration of the genius, and we become good-naturedly tolerant. It is “poor” Steele, “poor” Fielding, “poor” Coleridge. It is always “poor” Goldsmith.

Oliver Goldsmith was not happy in his birth. It was no great good fortune surely to be born the fifth child of the large family of a humble village preacher. When his famous son first opened his eyes, November 10, 1728, at the poor hamlet of Pallas in Longford, Ireland, the

Rev. Charles Goldsmith was assistant rector of the neighboring parish of Kilkenny West, and, like the pastor in the “Deserted Village,” “passing rich with forty pounds a year.” But better days came for the Goldsmiths shortly after the birth of their second boy. The father succeeds to the living; the forty pounds are multiplied by five; and Lissoy,—perhaps the original of Auburn,—a pretty little village between Ballymahon and Athlone, becomes the home of the tribe. No startling stories are told of little Noll’s precocity, even by the nurses, teachers, and playmates who lived to see his fame. There was, it is true, a schoolmistress, Elizabeth Delap, who taught him his letters, but, when an aged woman, she could remember only that the boy was dull, “impenetrably stupid.” Then there was the master of the village school, Thomas Byrne, veteran of Marlborough’s wars, who did little for the child save to fan the spirit of unrest within him by tales of bogies, fairies, and rapparees. He goes away from home to Mr. Griffin’s school at Elphin, where he is held in no high esteem. His face has been scarred by small-pox; his manners are shy and awkward; he seems “a stupid, heavy blockhead, little better than a fool.” Some traits, indeed, recommend him to his fellows, if not to his masters; he is good at boyish sports, he is ready for every prank, he will fight. He wanders to other schools, now at Athlone, now at Edgeworthstown,—Goldsmith, boy and man, is ever desultory,—remaining still of small repute. Yet Patrick Hughes, teacher at the last-named place, finds something to admire in him (we honor Patrick Hughes!) and en-

courages his taste for Ovid, Horace, and Livy. The other students marvel at the master's regard for Noll. "He was a plant that flowered late," said Dr. Johnson; "there appeared nothing remarkable about him when he was young."

At home, among those who love him, the boy sometimes gives promise of better things. Impromptu verses, clever rejoinders, and some power over his pen prove that he is "not altogether fool." But the home training at Lissoy was not that best fitted to Goldsmith's vagrant nature. He needed lessons in precision and self-restraint, — above all, in thrift and providence. His father spoke of universal benevolence as the cement of society. "He wound us up into mere machines of pity," says Goldsmith later, "and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse made either by real or fictitious distress; in a word, we were perfectly instructed in the art of giving away thousands, before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of getting a farthing."

The worthy parent was not, however, above false pride. To endow a daughter who has made a lucky marriage, he willingly robs his other children. The family circumstances are so straitened by this drain upon a small income that Oliver cannot enter Trinity College, Dublin, like his brother Henry, — as a "pensioner," or student paying his own expenses, — but is enrolled as a sizar or servant, in 1744. This is a hard lot for the easy-going lad, and he has not the strength to triumph over invidious conditions. His college career is in no way glorious, hardly indeed commendable. Insulted by a brutal tutor,

who lives only by the blows he deals to the object of his contempt, neglected by students of better fortune, fined, reprimanded, and once suspended by the authorities, the poor, wrong-headed youth must have rejoiced when finally admitted to the lowest of degrees. We know little of this academic period. He wrote street ballads and earned the “price of a song”; he participated in a riot between town and gown; by a dancing party in his room he moved the wrath of his tutor; he ran away and somewhat shamefacedly returned. But this is all. The great Edmund Burke, gentleman and scholar, type of the best in Trinity in young Goldsmith’s day, had little occasion, one suspects, to notice the somewhat disreputable sizar, his future friend.

The world is now before Goldsmith at twenty-one. His father has died, his mother is tenant of a cottage at Ballymahon, his brother Henry has the old curacy of forty pounds at Kilkenny West. He waits two years at the family house, intending then to qualify for orders. Some hours he passes at the teacher’s desk in the school; more at the table in the ale-houses, of which in “The Deserted Village” and in his dramas he displays a knowledge, first-hand and comprehensive. He is an idler, a good-for-naught; at a county fair or on an otter hunt he is a leader; it is pleasant enough to lie on the brook-side or to gaze into Cousin Con’s eyes, but he has yet no thought of serious things. What matters it that the Bishop rejects the candidate because his coat is too flaring? A kind relative, Uncle Contarine, is ready with suggestions and money loans, but the boy is hard to

help. He starts for America, to get no farther than Cork, returning to his disappointed people with strange fables of accidents and distress; he is given fifty pounds to try the law in Dublin,—his money is wasted in gambling-houses. There is one profession left: he has taught and failed, the clergy will have none of him, his legal opportunity has been whistled down the wind; medicine is the resource. He leaves Ireland in 1752—he will never see his native country again—to become a medical student at Edinburgh.

Goldsmith's residence in the Scotch capital belongs to the semi-mythical period of his life. In speaking of himself, he seldom gives expert evidence, and, indeed, he speaks but little of this time. His tailor's bill of 1753 has survived, however, to show that, though “poverty, hopeless poverty, was his lot” (to quote one of his letters), he would clothe his awkward little body in sky-blue satin and rich Genoa cloth. Economy was not one of the lessons that adversity taught to Oliver Goldsmith; he never learned to borrow “from back and belly.” He will be benefited, he thinks, by study in Leyden, so he obtains twenty pounds from the too generous uncle by the mention of very learned Dutch professors, and crosses to the continent; but we have again no record of anything but improvidence. Reduced to his last guinea, he continues his wanderings. The story of these rovings is told in part in “The Traveller”; we may therefore discuss them when dealing directly with that great poem.

Early in 1756, Goldsmith is back in London, a medical title, gained we know not where, when, or how, dignify-

ing his name. This appears to be his whole stock in trade, but he has brought back something more,—his penny of observation has purchased experience, a possession that even men of genius can ill afford to spare. The old tale of “Jack and the Beanstalk” is repeated with a different setting. The thriftless boy has bartered his home’s meat and drink—all the treasures of his training—for a few seemingly worthless seeds which he sows in his poet’s heart; from these rises a plant great and lofty, upon which he dares to climb to the very stronghold of this giant, *World*. In the dim, smoky chest marked “London” wealth is stored for him. Here is the hen that lays golden eggs; here, too, the enchanted harp that sings of its own will. He will overcome the giant and gain them all. But the climb is a long one, and the monster dies hard. Goldsmith, genius though he be, must suffer many tumbles, many knocks. He becomes the clerk of a poor apothecary; he sets himself up as a physician; he earns a pittance as corrector of the press in the printing-house of Mr. Samuel Richardson; as usher at Peckham School, he lives a careless, happy-go-lucky life. He undergoes disappointments that seem to him very grievous. He has built his hopes on a nomination as a physician on the coast of Coromandel; this, fortunately for English literature, he fails to gain. He is found “not qualified” for even the modest position of hospital mate. These are only different degrees of failure; his chance is to be found elsewhere. Perhaps the beginning of better things may be seen in his critical work for Griffiths, but this publisher is neither gentle

nor generous, and the poor hack must toil many hours in his dingy garret in Green Arbor Court. He seems as far as ever from his goal.

In 1759 Goldsmith publishes his "Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe." This, at least, is something more than penny-a-lining; the opinions, prejudices, experiences, and travels of the man appear. At thirty he has entered upon the great work which he was destined to do. Toward the close of this year are published the first numbers of *The Bee*—a periodical of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* type so popular at this period; no very fine thing this, and assuredly at no time widely read; but distinguished above a hundred such papers by the beautiful style which ever did honor to the writer. Matter is naught, manner is all, and in manner he continued the best traditions of Queen Anne's days. "The Citizen of the World" (1760), written in the character of a Chinese student of European life, proves that Goldsmith had observed nature and himself; while painting the habits of men, he is not averse to ascribing some of his own traits to the character of the Man in Black. Then there are other books that might have been made as well or better by far weaker men,—his "Life of Voltaire," his "Life of Nash," even his "History of England in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son," the foundation stone of his "History of England" of 1771. He is still (1763–1764) a hack writer, making prefaces to order, grinding out reviews, revamping books with butterfly lives; he is still in the clutches of a publisher, one New-

bery, who owns him wholly, fixes his quarters, and pays a scanty wage. But he has at last met the great men with whom his name will always be associated, and among whom he is to pass so many golden hours. Johnson, Reynolds, Burke, Beauclerk, and Garrick, all become his friends.

Goldsmith has yet to prove his right to a place among these giants. Dr. Johnson is soon convinced of his genius, when he reads "The Vicar of Wakefield," in manuscript, and raises sixty pounds upon this to free the improvident author from arrest for debt, in 1764. The world of letters is convinced — perhaps reluctantly, for Goldsmith was not a figure before which men eagerly bowed — when "The Traveller" appears in the last month of the same year. "This brought him into high reputation," is the evidence of Johnson himself; henceforth he may hold his head aloft, and need never more pound pestle. "The Hermit" is published in 1765; "The Vicar of Wakefield" in 1766. After these no one can question his claim to the rank which his genius has won.

There is one member of the circle in which he moves, of the famous "Club" which he helped to found, who has no love for the uncouth Irishman,—and unfortunately this man, in the very greatest of biographies, has impressed his judgment upon thousands. Boswell always makes Goldsmith the foil to his hero, Dr. Johnson — it is invariably Dr. Minor opposed to Dr. Major. It cannot be denied that poor Goldsmith (the adjective is inevitable) had many faults and follies; but every weakness had a corresponding virtue: vain in small things, he was modesty

itself when he spoke of his literary achievements; thrifless and improvident, he was one of the most generous of men; weak of will he may have been, but his strength of heart never failed; often prattling and inconsequent, he not infrequently displayed a quickness of wit that mastered his opponent in word-fence; undignified in manner and carriage, he showed splendid manhood in his rejection of patronage; he was no purist in life, but the purity of his work has never been impeached. "Let not his frailties be remembered," said Johnson; "he was a very great man." "Let them be remembered," added Irving, "since their tendency is to endear."

Goldsmith puts money in his purse—some five hundred pounds in all—by his play, "The Good Natured Man," in 1768. But the purse is not long plethoric; there are fine chambers in Middle Temple to be hired, there are fine clothes, "lined with silk, and gold buttons," and costly furniture to be paid for,—at least, in part; there are frolics over the card-table in his new rooms that sadly disturb Mr. Blackstone at his commentaries and moreover consume substance; duns are drumming constantly at his door—remember that he owed at his death £2000. More hack-work, no matter what kind. This time it happens to be a "History of Rome" (1769), which might very easily be worse; a little later he is toiling upon a "Grecian History" (not published until 1776). His style is, of course, charming, but he is far from exact. He does not hesitate to believe Gibbon's jesting statement that the Indian king who gave Alexander so much trouble was named "Montezuma." An equal lack of the

scholar's sense shows itself when he undertakes his study, "Animated Nature" (1769-1774). "Goldsmith will give us a very fine book upon the subject," says Dr. Johnson, "but if he can distinguish a cow from a horse, that, I believe, may be the extent of his knowledge of natural history."

The man of genius sometimes triumphs over the hack writer. "The Deserter Village" represents his poetical output of 1770; "She Stoops to Conquer" is the great hit of 1773 at Covent Garden. His social nature and gentle humor occasionally blend in some happy letter in verse or in some merry doggerel; this may take the form of praise of good cheer, as in "The Haunch of Venison," or of wise repartee, as in his pictures of Garrick, Burke, and Reynolds in "Retaliation." Humor or pathos — there is no lack of spontaneity, no false note in his music. "He wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll," said Garrick.

Night is however closing in about him. He is barely forty-five, but disease and depression are doing their work. Early in April, 1774, he is lying on his deathbed. "Is his mind at ease?" ask the doctors. "No, it is not," he answers, and these are his last words. He has loved no woman, though he remembers the color of Cousin Con's eyes and pays his little tribute to Miss Horneck, "The Jessamy Bride," and no woman is now by his bedside, smoothing his pillow; but, on the stairs without, some poor wretched creatures, whom his generous hand has helped, are weeping loudly. His body finds a resting place under the stones of the Temple, while his epitaph

is written in stately Latin upon the walls of Westminster Abbey by Dr. Johnson:—

“A Poet, Naturalist, and Historian,
Who left scarcely any style of writing untouched,
And touched nothing that he did not adorn.”

Bibliographical.—The chief “Lives” of Oliver Goldsmith are that by James Prior (1837), voluminous and accurate, but somewhat cumbrous and overladen, and the less weighty but far more readable biography by John Forster (1848). In 1849, Washington Irving gave final form to his sympathetic sketch of Goldsmith; and much later William Black (1878) and Austin Dobson (1888) contributed entertaining “Lives,” containing meaty criticism, to the “English Men of Letters” and the “Great Writers” series, respectively. Numerous anecdotes of Goldsmith are scattered through Boswell’s “Life of Johnson,” from which all biographers have drawn; while oft-quoted essays upon his career and works are those of Thackeray (“English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century”) and Macaulay (“Encyclopædia Britannica”). Every modern edition is prefaced by a memoir more or less complete. In the short summary of Goldsmith’s history, the editor has endeavored, not so much to crowd together in a little room a hundred dates and incidents, as to indicate, in the light of his life, his dominant traits as man and writer.

INTRODUCTION TO “THE TRAVELLER.”

As we have seen, Goldsmith was in Leyden in 1755, studying—at least so his friends supposed—under the extremely learned Gaubius and Albinus; but he had occupations perhaps more diverting, certainly more expensive, than chemistry lectures. His money was soon spent, doubtless at the gaming table. What must he do now? The Danish poet, Baron Holberg, had wandered through Europe penniless,—why should not “Noll” Goldsmith, with his strong young legs and his heart of hope? In February, 1755, he left Leyden bound everywhither. He picked up a medical degree at Louvain in Flanders, much as he would pick up a meal; in several letters to Cousin Con, he described, step by step, his vagabondage in France. These have unfortunately perished, but his itinerary may be traced in his verse and prose. Brussels, Maestricht, Antwerp—all furnished material for his essays; the flute-playing by which he won bed and board of the French peasantry was remembered by him in both “The Traveller” and “The Vicar of Wakefield.” His journey was always on foot, he slept on barn straw, his livelihood was that of a mendicant,—“there is hardly a kingdom of Europe in which he is not a debtor”—but it was never Goldsmith’s manner

to regard too fixedly the morrow; he sought an appetite for his dinner rather than a dinner for his appetite, and was very happy. For a while he lingered at Paris, attending chemistry lectures or wandering about the environs. His biographers note that at this period he seemed in better circumstances; perhaps, like his George Primrose, he became tutor to some scion of wealth who was making the grand tour. Germany he certainly visited, and sat in its lecture rooms. But he was then hurrying to Switzerland, which he entered at Schaffhausen. The frozen cataract of the Rhine was never forgotten by him, though one finds it difficult to reconcile such a sight with the accepted dates of his journey. We know that he visited Basle and Berne; that he spent some time in or around Geneva. He met and conversed with Voltaire at his country retreat, flushed woodcock on the slopes of Jura, and gazed on the Alps with eighteenth-century eyes; that is, with little of the modern feeling for wild nature. The "stormy mansions" passed, he descended into Italian valleys. In his "Animated Nature" he recalls the floating beehives of the Piedmont streams. Florence, Verona, Mantua, and Milan came within his ken; Carinthia won from him a curse; and Padua detained him a short while at her university (some indeed assert that it was here that he became Dr. Goldsmith). He probably visited Rome, for he speaks of "Campania's weary waste." The "Philosophic Wanderer" ("The Vicar of Wakefield") thus describes his homeward journey: "In all the foreign universities there are, upon certain days, philosophical theses maintained against every ad-

ventitious disputant; for which, if the champion opposes with any dexterity, he can claim gratuity in money, a dinner, and a bed for one night. In this manner then I fought my way towards England." So, if we may believe Boswell, Goldsmith himself made his way from city to city. In February, 1756, the year of wanderings was ended, and the traveller rested in London.

During his stay in Switzerland he had written a part of his "Traveller," as we learn from his dedication to that work. Just what lines of the poem were then composed and despatched to his brother, we shall never positively know; but it has been conjectured with reason that they are those which praise the noble and modest life of Henry Goldsmith, and which discuss the Swiss character and condition. The completed poem, however, did not appear until December 19, 1764. It had already received the approval of the great literary dictator of the time; Dr. Johnson had read the proof-sheets, and contributed a line or two, by no means to the poem's betterment. Now, upon its appearance, he applauded it in *The Critical Review*—an action which should have answered those disparaging voices from Goldsmith's circle of so-called friends, that declared the lexicographer the originator of the best thoughts here mated to verse. Whatever men might think of the poet, of the poem there was only one opinion. Though it had "neither abuse, party, nor blank verse to support it," its way to the hearts of the people was smoothed by praise from those best qualified to speak. There was no dissenting voice when Johnson pronounced it "the finest poem

since the death of Pope"; nor did any one demur when, later, Langton declared, somewhat extravagantly, that there was not a bad line in the poem, and when Fox multiplied Johnson's praise in the verdict—"It is one of the finest poems in the English language." Joshua Reynolds's sister, who had laughed at the Irishman's face and figure, listened attentively to a reading of "The Traveller." "Well," she exclaimed emphatically, "I never more shall think Dr. Goldsmith ugly." Popular favor approved somewhat slowly the edict of the court of letters. Three editions followed the first within a year, and, before Goldsmith died, ten years later, the ninth had been published. The "bookseller's drudge" had won ample glory—but he was only twenty guineas the richer. Newbery, his publisher, was not generous.

Now, what models had Goldsmith in his great descriptive poem of travel? All editors have pointed to Addison's "Letter from Italy" (1701). That he knew this poem, and indeed admired it extremely, is clear; he included it in more than one collection of verse; that he used it now is equally apparent to any one who will take the trouble to compare certain passages of the two productions. (See "The Traveller," Notes.) But it would be absurd to regard Goldsmith as deep in the debt of his famous predecessor. In "The Traveller," his description of Italy occupies sixty lines,—less than one-seventh of the whole; the "Letter from Italy" is nearly one hundred and seventy lines in length; only in some twenty lines can Goldsmith be supposed to have the earlier poem before him. Add ten lines more, in which, like

Addison, he praises British supremacy and British freedom, and these complete the obligation. And how has he employed this material? — slavishly and without originality? Surely not. Addison was one of the masters of English prose, but as a poet he seldom rose above mediocrity. The "Letter" is a fair specimen of the classical verse of his book-ruled school — very fair verse, the monotony of which is relieved by occasional enthusiasm — and nothing more. To the same substance Goldsmith has imparted the colors of the spirit in a way that only true poets know.

To another writer, a poet far greater than Addison, greater in some respects, indeed, than Goldsmith himself, the author of "The Traveller" owed not a little. This creditor was James Thomson, the singer of "The Seasons." "Shaped in any respect by Thomson's remark in one of his letters to Bubb Dodington," says Forster ("Life of Goldsmith," I. 367), "that a poetical landscape of countries, mixed with moral observations on their characters and people, would not be an ill-judged undertaking, it certainly could not have been; for that letter was not made public till many years after Goldsmith's death, when it appeared in Seward's 'Anecdotes.'" But neither Forster nor any other critic has noted in this connection Thomson's "Liberty" (1734-1736). The oversight is pardonable, for the poem, though the work of a man of genius, is as long-winded and prosy a piece of writing as eighteenth-century dulness ever elaborated to five cantos and three thousand lines. Professed admirers of Thomson were unequal to the Herculean task of master-

ing this portentous thing; Johnson tried to read it but soon desisted; Lyttleton labored sadly to reduce it to reasonable proportions. Strange to say, this poem was, we may fairly believe, of great service to Oliver Goldsmith. The title of the fifth canto, "The Prospect," may have suggested his sub-title, "A Prospect of Society." Thomson's pictures of Italian art, of Swiss scenery, of Gallic graces, of English independence, were certainly all remembered by him, as the editor's notes to "The Traveller" will show. Thomson had pointed out the evils arising from various forms of government; Goldsmith recalled his words when he painted the faults of each race and clime. Later, when he wished to portray in his "Deserted Village" the sad results of trade and luxury, he turned again to Thomson,—the fifth canto of "Liberty" furnishing in lead the design of many golden verses. Again there was no slavish copying. He took his own, when he found it in a dust-heap; from the rubbish, he sifted out what was good, and lent to it imperishable form.

If Goldsmith copied neither Addison nor Thomson, there was one great prose writer of this time whom he did not hesitate to follow blindly. He was ever a copyist of himself and was fortunate in having a worthy original. Hundreds of thoughts were made by him to do double service: having once found expression in his essays, they were given a finer setting in his poetry. To "The Bee," to "The Citizen of the World," to "Animated Nature," even to his letters, this economist in his literary stores often turned and was seldom disappointed. It is no bad

study in the art of poetry to watch the Promethean artist as he breathes life and fire into common clay of his own moulding, to observe how humble enough matter is glorified by the poet's fancy until it becomes an eternal possession of literature.

Goldsmith's deserved success was due only in the very smallest degree to his power of transmuting old material, of revamping the prosaic verse of other men or his own poetical prose. He had all the necessary gifts of a master of description—a seeing eye, a feeling heart, a contemplative mind (though this we must qualify), and finally the artist touch, without which the others are of but small account. "I do not speak without experience," he said of ragged roving; and the days of his vagabondage yielded a rich harvest to this careful observer. This man did not go to Virgil for his Italy—his sight was never marred, as Addison's often was, by the dust that arose from folios of unquestioned Latinity. He has marked unerringly Italian love of beauty, Swiss valor and strength, French regard for fame, Dutch patience and thrift, English liberty. When he fails in a picture, it is not because he has seen falsely, but because he has not seen far enough,—the limitations of his time oppose even the cosmopolitan. He cannot describe the Alps, since a love of wild nature was granted only to Gray and Thomson among the poets of this day. But he can portray with a few bold epithets the dikes and canals of Holland or the windings of the greatest river of France. And when he turns to England, he sees there no crowded courts and narrow streets; but this garret

dweller looks out upon a land of bright streams and green lawns, for his muse was not city bred.

Strength of vision may win our admiration, but one must feel, as well as see, to win our love. And Goldsmith felt. The warm Irish heart within his bosom was throbbing in every line that he wrote. Who can doubt that he is sincere when he extols the generous and hospitable brother, doing his duty in a poor parish; when he dwells sorrowfully upon his own life of grief and wandering; when he relates the tearful story of the wretched exiles; or when, with a burst of patriotic joy, he celebrates his countrymen, "the lords of human kind"? It is at these times that he appeals to us most. When he reflects, he is as mechanical as Pope, as didactic as Johnson. He had, indeed, the good sense to discard Johnson's epithet of "The Philosophic Wanderer"; he could not discard the philosophy as well. Only a fatuous admirer will claim that "The Traveller," or even "The Deserted Village," is a poem of sustained strength; and the reason for this unevenness is that in his moralizings upon liberty, trade, luxury, and other social and economic themes, Goldsmith seems to lose his individuality, and to become merely one of those clever rhymesters of the eighteenth century, who mated a liking for pasteboard abstractions to metrical exactness and monotony. His Apostrophe to Freedom ("The Traveller," 335-392) is not only as far below the level of the rest of the poem, as his Holland is beneath the "pent ocean"; with the exception of a dozen spirited lines, it is as smooth and dull as his Dutch canal. Meditating gently upon his

own homeless lot, or upon the fate of his people, he invites our love and pity; and from these intensely personal passages we turn very reluctantly to his abstruse and faulty speculations upon national wealth or decay.

The artist touch is apparent in everything from Goldsmith's hand. Careless in his life, he was supremely careful in his work; clipping, adding, revising, until a line or passage was as good as painstaking could make it. The history of the early editions of "The Traveller" is a record of changes and emendations. Between the first and the sixth editions (1770), thirty-six new lines were added and fourteen cancelled. Then, too, single words were weighed and tested critically, and when found wanting, were sacrificed for those that better suited sound and sense. (Notes to "The Traveller," lines 17, 38, 85, 155, 299, etc.) Sometimes the changes may amuse us. He cast out the reference to his "ragged pride" (line 364), for the reviser, the great Dr. Goldsmith, the friend of Johnson, Reynolds, and Burke, was a very different person from the poor creature who first fashioned the line, "Noll Goldsmith, hack-writer." But his reasons for change are rarely personal; he is ever thinking of his metre and movement, how may he avoid this harsh sound (cacophonies will creep in despite him), how shall he give a pleasing finish to this musical paragraph.

A word now of Goldsmith's metre. He was no friend to the forms of verse that were coming into favor with the dawn of romantic feeling. Blank verse, pindaric odes, choruses, anapests, and iambics, he attacked all

these somewhat bitterly in the dedication to "The Traveller"; at blank verse he had already had a fling in his "Present Inquiry." The heroic couplet, the rhyming five-stress verse of Dryden, Pope, and Johnson, is his instrument, and in his use of this he did not depart greatly from the orthodox methods of versifiers of classical stamp. In the poems before us there are no Alexandrines—verses of six stresses; no triplets, or groups of three rhymes each; few double sinkings—two syllables in the unstressed part of the foot; and the "run-on" lines—the thought passing from one line to the next without check or pause—are not numerous. He is, however, the master, not the slave, of his metre; he imparts freedom to his movement by frequent trochees (stressed preceding unstressed) at the beginning of his lines, and, by what is even more effective in preventing monotony of measure, occasional stresses upon the lighter syllables in the verse.

But if his metre is not very unlike that of his contemporaries in stress and quantity, his tone-quality, that indefinable feature of poetic style which always indicates the poet or betrays the rhymester-by-rule, owes little to any other man. And it is this which gives to his writing an element sadly lacking in his artificial century,—entirely absent, indeed, from the poems of Johnson, whom in the mere mechanics of verse he most resembles,—the element of charm. It is impossible to penetrate all the secrets of this subtle and charming tone-quality,—it is better that we cannot,—but we may note some of its manifestations. First of all, Goldsmith had an ex-

tremely sensitive ear; he delighted in happy vowel-sequences, in graceful combinations of consonants; he hunted the letter, but never beyond the limits of taste; his melody is so gently insistent that it persuades rather than forces attention, and is, besides, so pleasingly memorable that it haunts us for many hours. "A weary waste expanding to the skies" ("The Traveller," 6), "Where the broad ocean leans against the land" (Id. 284), "Casts a long look where England's glories shine" (Id. 420), are but three of many instances of the power of manner. And his love of delightful sounds is aptly seconded by his regard for words. A purist in a pedantic age, he sought ever forceful and simple speech. He knew that strength lay otherwhere than in "the great round word," and often achieved his finest effects with monosyllables: "And find no spot of all the world my own" ("The Traveller," 30), "And thanks his gods for all the good they gave" (Id. 72), "Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law" (Id. 386). He loves epithets that suggest rather than exhaust, that call upon our own imaginations to supply the picture; and his "Deserted Village" may have as many local habitations as Homer, for each man may read there the beauties and joys of his own country home. Again, he was an avowed enemy to involved sentences and awkward collocation—there is hardly a passage in either of his two great poems in which one needs the guidance of a grammarian, or over which critics may unprofitably wrangle. He is never ambiguous in his ellipses, never unfamiliar in his absolute constructions. The most ungainly passage in

"The Traveller" is the closing couplet — and Johnson wrote that.

Before passing to the plan of "The Traveller," let us consider the somewhat peculiar position among the English poems of Goldsmith's time occupied by his chief essays in verse. They mark a transition between the old and the new in poetical art. In some respects Goldsmith is as classical as Pope; he clings to the standard metre, he revels in formal balance and antitheses, he prefers the background of garden lawns to that of mountain wastes, he points his moral in the true eighteenth-century manner. On the other hand, he paves the way for the romantic writers of the coming generation; he seldom traffics successfully in abstraction, but prefers the homely concrete; he discards the classical terminology; Addison's "Eridanus" becomes with him the Po; sonorous Indian names, "Oswego," "Niagara," etc., later so dear to Campbell and Scott, make here their first appearance in poetry; he is intimate and intensely personal in his Bohemian half shame of self, his tender home-longing, his glowing pride of country; he looks at lowly things, at humble flowers, with the eye of a lover.

Macaulay's oft-quoted summary of "The Traveller" is perhaps the only paraphrase one needs: "The execution, though deserving of much praise, is far inferior to the design. No philosophical poem, ancient or modern, has a plan so noble and at the same time so simple. An English wanderer, seated on a crag among the Alps, near the point where three great countries meet, looks down on the boundless prospect, reviews his long pilgrimage,

recalls the varieties of scenery, of climate, of government, of religion, of national character, which he has observed, and comes to the conclusion, just or unjust, that our happiness depends little on political institutions, and much on the temper and regulation of our minds." To say more than this will be merely to impair—every reader may now analyze on whatever scale he will.

DEDICATION

TO THE REV. HENRY GOLDSMITH.

DEAR SIR,

I AM sensible that the friendship between us can acquire no new force from the ceremonies of a Dedication; and perhaps it demands an excuse thus to prefix your name to my attempts, which you decline giving with your own. But as a part of this poem was formerly written to you from Switzerland, the whole can now, with propriety, be only inscribed to you. It will also throw a light upon many parts of it, when the reader understands that it is addressed to a man who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year.

I now perceive, my dear brother, the wisdom of your humble choice. You have entered upon a sacred office, where the harvest is great, and the labourers are but few; while you have left the field of ambition, where the labourers are many, and the harvest not worth carrying away. But of all kinds of ambition, what from the refinement of the times, from different systems of criticism, and from the divisions of party, that which pursues poetical fame is the wildest.

Poetry makes a principal amusement among unpolished nations; but in a country verging to the extremes of

refinement, Painting and Music come in for a share. As these offer the feeble mind a less laborious entertainment, they at first rival Poetry, and at length supplant her; they engross all that favour once shown to her, and though but younger sisters, seize upon the elder's birth-right.

Yet, however this art may be neglected by the powerful, it is still in greater danger from the mistaken efforts of the learned to improve it. What criticisms have we not heard of late in favour of blank verse, and Pindaric odes, choruses, anapests and iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it; and as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say; for error is ever talkative.

But there is an enemy to this art still more dangerous, I mean Party. Party entirely distorts the judgment, and destroys the taste. When the mind is once infected with this disease, it can only find pleasure in what contributes to increase the distemper. Like the tiger, that seldom desists from pursuing man after having once preyed upon human flesh, the reader, who has once gratified his appetite with calumny, makes, ever after, the most agreeable feast upon murdered reputation. Such readers generally admire some half-witted thing, who wants to be thought a bold man, having lost the character of a wise one. Him they dignify with the name of poet; his tawdry lampoons are called satires, his turbulence is said to be force, and his phrenzy fire.

What reception a poem may find, which has neither

abuse, party, nor blank verse to support it, I cannot tell, nor am I solicitous to know. My aims are right. Without espousing the cause of any party, I have attempted to moderate the rage of all. I have endeavoured to show, that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own; that every state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess. There are few can judge, better than yourself, how far these positions are illustrated in this poem.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate Brother,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

THE TRAVELLER;

OR,

A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY.

REMOTE, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the lazy Scheldt, or wandering Po ;
Or onward, where the rude Carinthian boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door ;
Or where Campania's plain forsaken lies, 5
A weary waste expanding to the skies :
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravell'd fondly turns to thee ;
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain. 10

Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend :
Blest be that spot, where cheerful guests retire
To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire ;
Blest that abode, where want and pain repair, 15
And every stranger finds a ready chair ;
Blest be those feasts with simple plenty crown'd,
Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale ; 20
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good.

But me, not destin'd such delights to share,
My prime of life in wandering spent and care,

Impell'd, with steps unceasing, to pursue
 Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view ;
 That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
 Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies ;
 My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
 And find no spot of all the world my own.

25

Even now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
 I sit me down a pensive hour to spend ;
 And, plac'd on high above the storm's career,
 Look downward where an hundred realms appear ;
 Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide,
 The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.

35

When thus Creation's charms around combine,
 Amidst the store, should thankless pride repine ?
 Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
 That good, which makes each humbler bosom vain ?
 Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
 These little things are great to little man ;
 And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind
 Exults in all the good of all mankind.
 Ye glittering towns, with wealth and splendour crown'd ;
 Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round ;
 Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale ;
 Ye bending swains, that dress the flow'ry vale ;
 For me your tributary stores combine ;
 Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine !

40

50

As some lone miser visiting his store,
 Bends at his treasure, counts, re-counts it o'er ;
 Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
 Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still :
 Thus to my breast alternate passions rise,
 Pleas'd with each good that Heaven to man supplies :

55

Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,
 To see the hoard of human bliss so small ;
 And oft I wish, amidst the scene, to find
 Some spot to real happiness consign'd, 60
 Where my worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,
 May gather bliss to see my fellows blest.

But where to find that happiest spot below,
 Who can direct, when all pretend to know ?
 The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone 65
 Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own ;
 Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
 And his long nights of revelry and ease :
 The naked negro, panting at the line,
 Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine, 70
 Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
 And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
 Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
 His first, best country ever is at home.
 And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare, 75
 And estimate the blessings which they share,
 Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
 An equal portion dealt to all mankind ;
 As different good, by Art or Nature given,
 To different nations makes their blessings even. 80

Nature, a mother kind alike to all,
 Still grants her bliss at Labour's earnest call ;
 With food as well the peasant is supplied
 On Idra's cliffs as Arno's shelvy side ;
 And though the rocky-crested summits frown, 85
 These rocks, by custom, turn to beds of down.
 From Art more various are the blessings sent ;
 Wealth, commerce, honour, liberty, content.
 Yet these each other's power so strong contest,

That either seems destructive of the rest.

90

Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails,
And honour sinks where commerce long prevails.

Hence every state, to one lov'd blessing prone,
Conforms and models life to that alone.

Each to the favourite happiness attends,

95

And spurns the plan that aims at other ends ;
Till, carried to excess in each domain,
This favourite good begets peculiar pain.

But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
And trace them through the prospect as it lies :
Here for a while my proper cares resign'd,
Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind ;
Like yon neglected shrub at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.

100

Far to the right where Apennine ascends,
Bright as the summer, Italy extends ;
Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,
Woods over woods in gay theoric pride ;
While oft some temple's mould'ring tops between
With venerable grandeur mark the scene.

105

110

Could Nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest.
Whatever fruits in different climes were found,
That proudly rise, or humbly court the ground ;
Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear,
Whose bright succession decks the varied year ;
Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
With vernal lives that blossom but to die :
These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil ;
While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand
To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.

115

120

But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
In florid beauty groves and fields appear,
Man seems the only growth that dwindleth here.
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign,
Though poor, luxurious; though submissive, vain;
Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet untrue;
And even in penance planning sins anew.

125

All evils here contaminate the mind,
That opulence departed leaves behind;
For wealth was theirs, not far remov'd the date,
When commerce proudly flourish'd through the state;
At her command the palace learnt to rise,
Again the long-fall'n column sought the skies;
The canvas glow'd beyond even nature warm,
The pregnant quarry teem'd with human form;
Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
Commerce on other shores display'd her sail;
While nought remain'd of all that riches gave,
But towns unmann'd, and lords without a slave;
And late the nation found with fruitless skill
Its former strength was but plethoric ill.

135

140

Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride;
From these the feeble heart and long-fall'n mind
An easy compensation seem to find.

145

Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp array'd,
The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade;
Processions form'd for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove.
By sports like these are all their cares beguil'd,
The sports of children satisfy the child;
Each nobler aim, represt by long control,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul;

150

155

While low delights, succeeding fast behind,
 In happier meanness occupy the mind :
 As in those domes, where Cæsars once bore sway,
 Defac'd by time and tottering in decay, 160
 There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
 The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed ;
 And, wondering man could want the larger pile,
 Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.

My soul, turn from them, turn we to survey 165
 Where rougher climes a nobler race display,
 Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansions tread,
 And force a churlish soil for scanty bread.
 No product here the barren hills afford,
 But man and steel, the soldier and his sword ; 170
 No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
 But winter lingering chills the lap of May ;
 No Zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,
 But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.

Yet still, even here, content can spread a charm, 175
 Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.
 Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts though small,
 He sees his little lot the lot of all ;
 Sees no contiguous palace rear its head
 To shame the meanness of his humble shed ; 180
 No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal,
 To make him loathe his vegetable meal ;
 But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,
 Each wish contracting, fits him to the soil.
 Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose, 185
 Breasts the keen air, and carols as he goes ;
 With patient angle trolls the finny deep,
 Or drives his venturous ploughshare to the steep,
 Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark the way,
 And drags the struggling savage into day. 190

At night returning, every labour sped,
 He sits him down the monarch of a shed ;
 Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
 His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze ;
 While his lov'd partner, boastful of her hoard,
 Displays her cleanly platter on the board :
 And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,
 With many a tale repays the nightly bed.

195

Thus every good his native wilds impart
 Imprints the patriot passion on his heart ;
 And even those ills, that round his mansion rise,
 Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
 Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
 And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms ;
 And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
 Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
 So the loud torrent, and the whirlwind's roar,
 But bind him to his native mountains more.

200

205

Such are the charms to barren states assign'd ;
 Their wants but few, their wishes all confin'd. 210
 Yet let them only share the praises due,
 If few their wants, their pleasures are but few ;
 For every want that stimulates the breast
 Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest.
 Whence from such lands each pleasing science flies, 215
 That first excites desire, and then supplies ;
 Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,
 To fill the languid pause with finer joy ;
 Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,
 Catch every nerve, and vibrate through the frame. 220
 Their level life is but a smouldering fire,
 Unquench'd by want, unfann'd by strong desire ;
 Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer

On some high festival of once a year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.

225

But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow :
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low ;
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
Unalter'd, unimprov'd, the manners run ;
And love's and friendship's finely-pointed dart
Fall blunted from each indurated heart.

230

Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
May sit, like falcons cowering on the nest ;
But all the gentler morals, such as play
Through life's more cultur'd walks, and charm the way,
These far dispers'd, on timorous pinions fly,
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.

235

To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
I turn ; and France displays her bright domain. 240
Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleas'd with thyself, whom all the world can please,
How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire ?
Where shading elms along the margin grew, 245
And freshen'd from the wave the Zephyr flew ;
And haply, though my harsh touch, faltering still,
But mock'd all tune, and marr'd the dancer's skill ;
Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour. 250
Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days
Have led their children through the mirthful maze,
And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic lore,
Has frisk'd beneath the burthen of threescore.

250

250

So blest a life these thoughtless realms display, 255
Thus idly busy rolls their world away :

Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,
 For honour forms the social temper here :
 Honour, that praise which real merit gains,
 Or even imaginary worth obtains,

260

Here passes current ; paid from hand to hand,
 It shifts in splendid traffic round the land ;
 From courts, to camps, to cottages it strays,
 And all are taught an avarice of praise.

They please, are pleas'd, they give to get esteem,
 Till, seeming blest, they grow to what they seem.

265

But while this softer art their bliss supplies,
 It gives their follies also room to rise ;
 For praise too dearly lov'd, or warmly sought,
 Enfeebles all internal strength of thought ;

270

And the weak soul, within itself unblest,
 Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.

Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,
 Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart ;
 Here vanity assumes her pert grimace,
 And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace ;

275

Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,
 To boast one splendid banquet once a year ;
 The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,

Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause.

280

To men of other minds my fancy flies,
 Embosom'd in the deep where Holland lies.
 Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
 Where the broad ocean leans against the land,
 And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,

285

Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.

Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,
 The firm-connected bulwark seems to grow ;
 Spreads its long arms amidst the watery roar,

Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore :
 While the pent ocean rising o'er the pile,
 Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile ;
 The slow canal, the yellow-blossom'd vale,
 The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,
 The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,
 A new creation rescued from his reign.

290

Thus, while around the wave-subjected soil
 Impels the native to repeated toil,
 Industrious habits in each bosom reign,
 And industry begets a love of gain. 300
 Hence all the good from opulence that springs,
 With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,
 Are here display'd. Their much-lov'd wealth imparts
 Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts ;
 But view them closer, craft and fraud appear,
 Even liberty itself is barter'd here.
 At gold's superior charms all freedom flies,
 The needy sell it, and the rich man buys ;
 A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,
 Here wretches seek dishonourable graves, 310
 And calmly bent, to servitude conform,
 Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm.

Heavens ! how unlike their Belgic sires of old !
 Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold ;
 War in each breast, and freedom on each brow ;
 How much unlike the sons of Britain now ! 315

Fir'd at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,
 And flies where Britain courts the western spring ;
 Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,
 And brighter streams than fam'd Hydaspes glide. 320
 There all around the gentlest breezes stray,

There gentle music melts on every spray ;
 Creation's mildest charms are there combin'd,
 Extremes are only in the master's mind !
 Stern o'er each bosom reason holds her state, 325
 With daring aims irregularly great ;
 Pride in their port, defiance in their eye ;
 I see the lords of human kind pass by,
 Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
 By forms unfashion'd, fresh from Nature's hand, 330
 Fierce in their native hardness of soul,
 True to imagin'd right, above control,
 While even the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
 And learns to venerate himself as man.

Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictur'd here, 335
 Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear ;
 Too blest, indeed, were such without alloy,
 But foster'd even by Freedom ills annoy :
 That independence Britons prize too high,
 Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie ; 340
 The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,
 All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown.
 Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,
 Minds combat minds, repelling and repell'd ;
 Ferments arise, imprison'd factions roar, 345
 Represt ambition struggles round her shore,
 Till over-wrought, the general system feels
 Its motions stop, or frenzy fire the wheels.

Nor this the worst. As nature's ties decay,
 As duty, love, and honour fail to sway, 350
 Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,
 Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.
 Hence all obedience bows to these alone,
 And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown ;

Till time may come, when stript of all her charms,
 The land of scholars, and the nurse of arms,
 Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,
 Where kings have toil'd, and poets wrote for fame,
 One sink of level avarice shall lie,
 And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonour'd die.

355

Yet think not, thus when Freedom's ills I state,
 I mean to flatter kings, or court the great ;
 Ye powers of truth, that bid my soul aspire,
 Far from my bosom drive the low desire ;
 And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to feel
 The rabble's rage, and tyrant's angry steel ;
 Thou transitory flower, alike undone
 By proud contempt, or favour's fostering sun,
 Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure !

365

I only would repress them to secure :
 For just experience tells, in every soil,
 That those who think must govern those that toil ;
 And all that Freedom's highest aims can reach,
 Is but to lay proportion'd loads on each.
 Hence, should one order disproportion'd grow,
 Its double weight must ruin all below.

370

•

375

O then how blind to all that earth requires,
 Who think it freedom when a part aspires !
 Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise in arms,
 Except when fast-approaching danger warms :
 But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,
 Contracting regal power to stretch their own,
 When I behold a factious band agree
 To call it freedom when themselves are free ;
 Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw,
 Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law ;
 The wealth of climes, where savage nations roam,

380

385

Pillag'd from slaves to purchase slaves at home ;
 Fear, pity, justice, indignation start,
 Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling heart ; 390
 Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,
 I fly from petty tyrants to the throne.

Yes, brother, curse with me that baleful hour,
 When first ambition struck at regal power ;
 And thus polluting honour in its source, 395
 Gave wealth to sway the mind with double force.
 Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,
 Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore ?
 Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,
 Like flaring tapers brightening as they waste ? 400
 Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
 Lead stern depopulation in her train,
 And over fields where scatter'd hamlets rose,
 In barren solitary pomp repose ?
 Have we not seen, at pleasure's lordly call, 405
 The smiling long-frequented village fall ?
 Beheld the duteous son, the sire decay'd,
 The modest matron, and the blushing maid,
 Forc'd from their homes, a melancholy train,
 To traverse climes beyond the western main ; 410
 Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,
 And Niagara stuns with thundering sound ?

Even now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays
 Through tangled forests, and through dangerous ways,
 Where beasts with man divided empire claim, 415
 And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim ;
 There, while above the giddy tempest flies,
 And all around distressful yells arise,
 The pensive exile, bending with his woe,
 To stop too fearful, and too faint to go, 420

Casts a long look where England's glories shine,
And bids his bosom sympathise with mine.

Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centres in the mind :
Why have I stray'd from pleasure and repose, 425
To seek a good each government bestows ?
In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings, or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure ! 430
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
Our own felicity we make or find :
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
The lifted axe, the agonising wheel, 435
Luke's iron crown, and Damiens' bed of steel,
To men remote from power but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience, all our own.

INTRODUCTION TO “THE DESERTED VILLAGE.”

FIVE years had passed since the appearance of “The Traveller,” and Goldsmith, during this lustrum, had given out only a few “occasional” poems. But his reputation had been so increased by “The Vicar of Wakefield” and “The Good-Natured Man” that any new thing from his hand was sure to be eagerly welcomed. On May 26, 1770, all Londoners who read at all were turning the leaves of a two-shilling quarto that contained a poem even better, said public opinion, than the Doctor’s first success. General approval outran all expectation. A second, a third, a fourth edition, appeared in June, and, these failing to supply the demand, a fifth in mid-August. It is not hard to understand why all men praised. In the same flowing metre, in the same graceful words, were sung the moving themes of simple pathos that made the earlier work so touching: gentle home life and joys, the sadness of farewells, the grief of the exile—but now brought a hundred times nearer to the heart and eyes by the background of a countryside in Great Britain, by the minute portrayal of characters coming within every reader’s range. “The Deserted Village” is larger and more human, yet more compact, better focussed, infinitely more intensive than “The Traveller.”

If Goldsmith had won the suffrages of the multitude, the favor of the great few was his as well. To his eternal honor, he did not seek the patronage of the peerage in a "letter of dedication to a Noble Lord," but his manly yet tender nature spoke to a tried friend, Joshua Reynolds. "Setting interest therefore, aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you." His rewards were not material ones. There was for him no secretaryship as was found for Addison, no embassy as for Mat Prior; but there were recompenses more potent for his fame. "This man is a poet," declared Gray, listening in his life's twilight to the fate of the village. "What true and pretty pastoral images!" said Edmund Burke, "they beat all—Pope, and Philips, and Spenser too, in my opinion." "A fine performance," asserted the not over-lavish Johnson.

Not, however, from his own countrymen did the highest tribute to Goldsmith come, but from the great German who had found "The Vicar of Wakefield" so completely to his taste. Goethe's "Truth and Poetry" (Oxenford's translation, I. 474, cited by Forster, "Life," II. 200) contains a passage of sympathetic commentary that would have gone straight to Goldsmith's heart: "A little poem, which we passionately received into our circle, allowed us from henceforward to think of nothing else. Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village' necessarily delighted every one at that grade of cultivation, in that sphere of thought. Not a

living and active, but a departed, vanished existence was described ; all that one so readily looked upon, that one loved, prized, sought passionately in the present, to take part in it with the cheerfulness of youth. Highdays and holydays in the country, church consecrations and fairs, the solemn assemblage of the elders under the village linden tree, supplanted in its turn by the lively delight of youth in dancing, while the more educated classes show their sympathy. How seemly did these pleasures appear, moderated as they were by an excellent country pastor, who understood how to smooth down and remove all that went too far, that gave occasion to quarrel and dispute. Here again we found an honest Wakefield, in his well-known circle, yet no longer in his living bodily form, but as a shadow recalled by the soft mournful tones of the elegiac poet. The very thought of this poem is one of the happiest possible, when once the design is formed to evoke once more an innocent past with a graceful melancholy. And in this kindly endeavor, how well has the Englishman succeeded in every sense of the word ! I shared enthusiasm for this charming poem with Cotter, who was more felicitous than myself with the translation undertaken by us both ; for I had too painfully tried to imitate in our language the delicate significance of the original, and thus had well agreed with single passages, but not with the whole."

Where now was this deserted village ? The desire to give every creation of fancy a place in the "dull catalogue of common things," to "know the woof and texture of the rainbow," has led the critics into some very pretty detective work. The site, of course, is Lissoy, they declare,

and point straightway to pool and hawthorn tree, and mill and ale-house, and the church on the hill. Did not the very original of the preacher and the schoolmaster and the wretched matron dwell in this hamlet of Westmeath? Does not the poet speak of "seats of my youth?" Has he not in mind the evictions that made the name of General Napper so hateful to these Irish peasants? And has he not read his countryman, Lawrence Whyte's poem (1741) on the barbarity of Irish landlords? The identification is accepted; a lover of graceful sentiment, one Mr. Hogan, restores the tavern, following literally the poetic picture, and pilgrims come trooping to the shrine; the village thorn is only less sacred than that famous one at Glastonbury, which sprang from the holy blood. I think that Goldsmith would have spoken of all this almost in the words of Hawthorne's preface to "The House of the Seven Gables":— "To assign an actual locality . . . exposes the romance to an inflexible and exceedingly dangerous species of criticism, by bringing fancy pictures almost into positive contact with the realities of the moment. . . . The author trusts not to be considered as unpardonably offending, by laying out a street that infringes upon nobody's private rights and appropriating a lot of land which had no visible owner and building a house of materials long in use for constructing castles in the air." Of course the poet had in mind the scenes and friends of his childhood, as Hawthorne was thinking of Salem; but to doubt his privilege to blend these into a composite picture with the images seen in his rambles in English country, regarding perspective and preserving consistency — to doubt this, is to degrade literary

art into photography. Entirely too much has been made of Macaulay's confident objection that the village is English in its happy days, and Irish in its decay, and that in bringing together felicity and misery belonging to two different countries and to two different stages in the progress of society, Goldsmith has committed an unpardonable fault. To this there are two answers. Granting for one moment Macaulay's premises, we may question his conclusion by claiming that dramatic probability and not economic accuracy is all that we can demand of an artist. But we cannot grant his premises, for such evictions as Goldsmith describes, while far rarer in England than in Ireland, were entirely possible there, and are possible even to-day. "It is within the last twenty years that an English landlord, having faith in his riches, bade a village to be removed and cast elsewhere, so that it should no longer be visible from his window, and it was forthwith removed." (Black, "Life of Goldsmith," 120.)

To discuss briefly the economic theories set forth by Goldsmith in his greatest poem. For once he labored to be accurate—with very indifferent success. In the Dedication he assures us that he has taken all possible pains to be certain of what he alleges; he has no doubt that the land is depopulating, because he has observed many signs of this in his "country excursions for four or five years past." It would not be much more absurd to estimate the depth—or perhaps the currents—of the sea, by gazing intently at the surface: soundings and tests can alone satisfy. An individual opinion unsupported by statistics goes for naught; but it is surely better to be imaginatively wrong than prosaically

right,—at least in a poem. Remembering that his mistakes did not mar a whit the literary merit of his work, we must yet note that Goldsmith was doubly wrong: wrong in his statement of fact, for England was really gaining, not losing, in population; wrong in his assumption that wealth and trade, which he confounds with luxury, "thin mankind."

Erring in these points, Goldsmith was however undeniably right in his exposition of certain evils attending the accumulation of wealth. Like Bishop Latimer, two centuries before him (Note to "The Deserted Village," lines 57–62), and Washington Irving, a half century later ("The Sketch Book,"—"Rural Life in England") he perceived that the rich landowner was the greatest enemy to the petty farmer, that the larger estates were absorbing the smaller, and that the sturdy race of yeomen were in danger of annihilation. He saw "the cottage spurned from the green" by park and stable and hall, he saw the poor peasant deprived of all that made life possible, even of common for his flock, and finally forced to leave his home, either for the great city or for "seats beyond the western main." Any reference to the social history of the time will show how real were all these evils.

Goldsmith finds little chance for the exiles elsewhere. Unlike his friend, Johnson, who loved Fleet Street better than green fields, unlike that later dweller in the Temple, Charles Lamb, who preferred his London to the Lake Country, he speaks sadly, even gloomily, of the metropolis. In "The Citizen of the World," in "The Bee,"—wherever indeed he paints the great city,—he reveals only its darkest

side; what can await the poor peasants there, but cold and hunger? And if they seek a home across the sea? There is nothing of the spirit of the greater England in Goldsmith, nothing of that eagerness for expansion, which was laying in his own day the foundation stones of the magnificent colonial system of a world empire. Thomson, writing his "Liberty" in Goldsmith's early boyhood, sees in the new land a Utopia of social freedom (Note to "The Deserted Village," line 341); but the author of "The Citizen of the World" puts such words as these into the mouth of his cultured Oriental (Letter XVII.): "There are many Englishmen who are for transplanting new colonies into this late acquisition, for peopling the deserts of America with the refuse of their countrymen and (as they express it) with the waste of an exuberant nation. But who are those unhappy creatures who are to be thus drained away?" Swamps and jungles, sunstrokes and tornadoes, savage beasts and more savage men await the once happy people of Auburn. The poem closes without a note of hope for those sufferers.

DEDICATION

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

DEAR SIR,

I CAN have no expectations in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest therefore aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this Poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to enquire; but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion) that the depopulation it deplores is no where to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarcely make any other answer than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains, in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege; and that all my views and enquiries have

led me to believe those miseries real, which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an enquiry, whether the country be depopulating, or not; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician, to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries; and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty years past, it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages; and all the wisdom of antiquity in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states, by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question, that, merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your sincere friend, and ardent admirer,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

SWEET AUBURN ! / loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty / cheer'd the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring / its earliest visit paid,
And parting / summer's lingering blooms delay'd : 5
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene !
How often have I paus'd on every charm,
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm, 10
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made !
How often have I blest the coming day, 15
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree ;
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old survey'd ; 20
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round
And still as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd ;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown, 25
By holding out to tire each other down ;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,

While secret laughter titter'd round the place ;
 The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
 The matron's glance that would those looks reprove : 30
 These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,
 With sweet succession, taught even toil to please ;
 These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
 These were thy charms — but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn, 35
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;
 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
 And desolation saddens all thy green :
 One only master grasps the whole domain,
 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain. 40
 No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
 But chok'd with sedges, works its weedy way ;
 Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
 The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest ;
 Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies, 45
 And tires their echoes with unvaried cries ;
 Sunk are thy bowers, in shapeless ruin all,
 And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall ;
 And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
 Far, far away, thy children leave the land. 50

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
 Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade :
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made ;
 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride, 55
 When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
 When every rood of ground maintain'd its man ;
 For him light labour spread her wholesome store,

Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more: 60
 His best companions, innocence and health ;
 And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are alter'd ; trade's unfeeling train
 Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ;
 Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose, 65
 Unwieldy wealth, and cumbrous pomp repose ;
 And every want to opulence allied,
 And every pang that folly pays to pride.
 Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
 Those calm desires that ask'd but little room, 70
 Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,
 Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all the green ;
 These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
 And rural mirth and manners are no more.

SWEET AUBURN ! parent of the blissful hour, 75
 Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
 Here as I take my solitary rounds,
 Amidst thy tangling walks, and ruin'd grounds,
 And, many a year elaps'd, return to view
 Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew, 80
 Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
 In all my griefs — and God has given my share —
 I still had hopes my latest hours to crown, 85
 Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;
 To husband out life's taper at the close,
 And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
 I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
 Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill, 90
 Around my fire an evening group to draw,
 And tell of all I felt, and all I saw ;

And, as an hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
 Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
 I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
 Here to return — and die at home at last.

95

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
 Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
 How happy he who crowns, in shades like these,
 A youth of labour with an age of ease; 100
 Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
 And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly !
 For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
 Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep ;
 No surly porter stands in guilty state 105
 To spurn imploring famine from the gate ;
 But on he moves to meet his latter end,
 Angels around befriending virtue's friend ;
 Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,
 While resignation gently slopes the way ; 110
 And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
 His heaven commences ere the world be past !

105

110

115

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
 Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
 There, as I pass'd with careless steps and slow,
 The mingling notes came soften'd from below ;
 The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
 The sober herd that low'd to meet their young,
 The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
 The playful children just let loose from school, 120
 The watchdog's voice that bay'd the whisp'ring wind,
 And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind ;
 These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
 And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
 But now the sounds of population fail,

120

125

No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.

All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring ; 130
She, wretched matron, forc'd in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn ;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain. 135

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild ;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140

A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year ;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wished to change his place ;
Unpractis'd he to fawn, or seek for power, 145
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour ;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train ;
He chid their wanderings, but reliev'd their pain ; 150
The long remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd ;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay, 155
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.
Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learned to glow,

And quite forgot their vices in their woe ;
 Careless their merits, or their faults to scan,
 His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
 And even his failings lean'd to virtue's side ;
 But in his duty prompt at every call, 160
 He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all ;
 And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
 To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
 He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
 Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
 And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns, dismay'd,
 The reverend champion stood. At his control
 Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul ;
 Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise, 175
 And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
 His looks adorn'd the venerable place ;
 Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
 And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray. 180
 The service past, around the pious man,
 With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;
 Even children follow'd with endearing wile,
 And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile.
 His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest, 185
 Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distrest ;
 To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
 But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
 As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, 190
 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
 With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
 There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
 The village master taught his little school.

195

A man severe he was, and stern to view ;
 I knew him well, and every truant knew :
 Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
 The day's disasters in his morning face ;
 Full well they laugh'd, with counterfeited glee,
 At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;
 Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
 Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd.

200

Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
 The love he bore to learning was in fault ;
 The village all declar'd how much he knew
 'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too ;
 Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
 And even the story ran that he could gauge.

210

In arguing too, the parson own'd his skill,
 For even though vanquish'd, he could argue still ;
 While words of learned length and thundering sound
 Amaz'd the gazing rustics rang'd around,
 And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew,
 That one small head could carry all he knew.

215

But past is all his fame. The very spot
 Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.
 Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
 Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye, 220
 Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd,
 Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,
 Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,
 And news much older than their ale went round.
 Imagination fondly stoops to trace
 The parlour splendours of that festive place :

225

The white-wash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,
 The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door;
 The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,
 A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day; 230
 The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,
 The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;
 The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
 With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;
 While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show, 235
 Rang'd o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

Vain transitory splendours ! could not all
 Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall ?
 Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
 An hour's importance to the poor man's heart. 240
 Thither no more the peasant shall repair
 To sweet oblivion of his daily care ;
 No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
 No more the wood-man's ballad shall prevail ;
 No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear, 245
 Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear ;
 The host himself no longer shall be found
 Careful to see the mantling bliss go round ;
 Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
 Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
 These simple blessings of the lowly train ;
 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
 One native charm, than all the gloss of art ;
 Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play, 255
 The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway ;
 Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
 Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd :
 But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,

With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd, 260
 In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
 The toiling pleasure sickens into pain ;
 And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
 The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
 The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
 'Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
 Between a splendid and a happy land.

Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
 And shouting Folly hails them from her shore ; 270
 Hoards even beyond the miser's wish abound,
 And rich men flock from all the world around.
 Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
 That leaves our useful products still the same.

Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
 Takes up a space that many poor supplied ;
 Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
 Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds :
 The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
 Has robb'd the neighbouring fields of half their growth ; 280
 His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
 Indignant spurns the cottage from the green ;
 Around the world each needful product flies,
 For all the luxuries the world supplies :
 While thus the land adorn'd for pleasure, all
 In barren splendour feebly waits the fall. 285

As some fair female unadorn'd and plain,
 Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
 Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
 Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes :
 But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
 When time advances, and when lovers fail,

She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
 In all the glaring impotence of dress.
 Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd, 295
 In nature's simplest charms at first array'd,
 But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise ;
 While, scourg'd by famine from the smiling land,
 The mournful peasant leads his humble band ; 300
 And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
 The country blooms — a garden, and a grave.

Where then, ah ! where, shall poverty reside,
 To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride ?
 If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd, 305
 He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
 And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped — what waits him there ?
 To see profusion that he must not share ;
 To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd
 To pamper luxury, and thin mankind ;
 To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
 Extorted from his fellow creature's woe.
 Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade, 310
 There the pale artist plies the sickly trade ;
 Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
 There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
 The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign
 Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train ; 315
 Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
 The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
 Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy !
 Sure these denote one universal joy !
 Are these thy serious thoughts ? — Ah, turn thine eyes 325

Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
 She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
 Has wept at tales of innocence distrest ;
 Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
 Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn ; 330
 Now lost to all ; her friends, her virtue fled,
 Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
 And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
 With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
 When idly first, ambitious of the town, 335
 She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet AUBURN, thine, the loveliest train,
 Do thy fair tribes participate her pain ?
 Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
 At proud men's doors they ask a little bread ! 340

Ah, no ! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
 Where half the convex world intrudes between,
 Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
 Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
 Far different there from all that charm'd before, 345
 The various terrors of that horrid shore ;
 Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
 And fiercely shed intolerable day ;
 Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
 But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling ; 350
 Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,
 Where the dark scorpion gathers death around ;
 Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
 The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake ;
 Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey, 355
 And savage men more murderous still than they ;
 While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
 Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.

Far different these from every former scene,
 The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
 The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
 That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

360

Good Heaven ! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
 That call'd them from their native walks away ;

When the poor exiles, every pleasure past, 365

Hung round their bowers, and fondly look'd their last,

And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain

For seats like these beyond the western main ;

And shuddering still to face the distant deep,

Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep. 370

The good old sire the first prepar'd to go

To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe ;

But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,

He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.

His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears, 375

The fond companion of his helpless years,

Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,

And left a lover's for a father's arms.

With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,

And blest the cot where every pleasure rose ; 380

And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,

And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear ;

Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief

In all the silent manliness of grief.

385

380

O luxury ! thou curst by Heaven's decree,

385

How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee !

How do thy potions, with insidious joy

Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy !

Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,

Boast of a florid vigour not their own.

390

At every draught more large and large they grow,

A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe ;
 Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
 Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun, 395
 And half the business of destruction done ;
 Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
 I see the rural virtues leaye the land.
 Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
 That idly waiting flaps with every gale, 400
 Downward they move, a melancholy band,
 Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
 Contented toil, and hospitable care,
 And kind connubial tenderness, are there ;
 And piety with wishes plac'd above, 405
 And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
 And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
 Still first to fly where sensual joys invade ;
 Unfit in these degenerate times of shame,
 To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame ; 410
 Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
 My shame in crowds, my solitary pride ;
 Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
 That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so ;
 Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel, 415
 Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well !
 Farewell, and O ! where'er thy voice be tried,
 On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
 Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
 Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420
 Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
 Redress the rigours of the inclement clime ;
 Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain ;
 Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain ;
 Teach him, that states of native strength possest, 425

Though very poor, may still be very blest ;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away ;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

430

NOTES.

THE TRAVELLER.

The Dedication. “But of all kinds of ambition, etc.” The first edition reads: “But of all kinds of ambition, as things are now circumstanced, perhaps that which pursues poetical fame is the wildest. What from the increased refinement of the times, from the diversity of judgement produced by opposing systems of criticism, and from the more prevalent divisions of opinion influenced by party, the strongest and happiest efforts can expect to please but in a very narrow circle. Though the poet were as sure of his aim as the imperial archer of antiquity, who boasted that he never missed the heart, yet would many of his shafts now fly at random, for the heart is too often in the wrong place.”

Line 1. “The very first line of the poem strikes a keynote—there is in it a pathetic thrill of distance and regret and longing; and it has the soft musical sound that pervades the whole composition.” (Black, “Goldsmith,” English Men of Letters Series, 71.)

Line 1. “Slow.” “Chamier once asked him (Goldsmith) what he meant by *slow*, the last word in the first line of ‘The Traveller.’ Did he mean the tardiness of locomotion? Goldsmith, who would say something without consideration, answered, ‘Yes.’ I was sitting by and said, ‘No, sir; you do not mean tardiness of locomotion; you mean that sluggishness of mind which comes upon a man in solitude.’ Chamier believed then that I had written the line as much as if he had seen me write it.” (Johnson, Boswell’s “Life of Johnson,” Crowell edition, II. 168.)

Line 2. “Lazy Scheldt.” The river Scheldt “drags its slow length along” between Holland and Belgium.

Line 2. “Wandering Po.” The ancient Padus or Eridanus, the largest river in Italy, is 500 miles in length, rises in the Alps, and falls into the Adriatic. Pyper marks “vagus” as one of its classical epithets (Gradus). Compare Addison’s “Letter from Italy,” line 25:—

“ Fired with a thousand raptures I survey
 Eridanus through flowery meadows *stray*,
 The king of floods.”

Line 3. “The rude Carinthian boor.” Carinthia (a province in western Austria, of which Klagenfurth is the capital) was visited by Goldsmith in 1755. “Being once questioned by Mr. Hickey on the justice of the censure passed upon a people whom other travellers praised for being as good as, if not better than, their neighbors, Goldsmith gave as a reason his being once after a fatiguing day’s walk obliged to quit a house he had entered for shelter and pass part or the whole of the night in seeking another.” (Prior’s “Life of Goldsmith,” 1837, page 109.)

Line 5. “Campania’s plain.” Not the province of Southern Italy, but the “Campagna” of Rome. “We descended into the Campania of Rome, which is almost a desert,” writes Smollett, two months after “The Traveller” appeared. “It is nothing but a naked, withered down, desolate and dreary, almost without enclosure, cornfield, hedge, tree, shrub, house, hut, or habitation.” (“Travels through France and Italy,” Feb. 20, 1765.)

Line 6. “Expanding.” The early editions read “expanded.”

Lines 7-10. Prior compares Goldsmith’s “The Citizen of the World,” Letter III. : “The farther I travel, I feel the pain of separation with a stronger force; those ties that bind me to my native country and you are still unbroken; by every remove I only drag a greater length of chain.”

Line 11. “My earliest friend.” The brother of line 9 and of the Dedication.

Lines 16, 21. The praise of hospitality is often celebrated by Goldsmith (see “The Vicar of Wakefield,” Chap. I.) : “We often had the traveller or stranger visit us. . . . The poorer the guest, the better pleased he ever is with being treated. Never was the family of Wakefield known to turn the traveller or poor dependent out of doors.” Compare “The Deserted Village,” 142-162; “The Vicar of Wakefield,” VI.

Line 17. The first edition reads, “Blest be those feasts where mirth and peace abound.”

Line 23. “Me.” This is the direct object of *leads* (line 29), though the construction of this poetical sentence is far from simple. Compare Addison, “Letter from Italy,” line 5 : “Me into foreign realms my fate conveys.”

Line 24. "My prime of life in wandering spent and care." Perhaps "wandering" has a broad signification ("The Deserted Village," 83). From the time of his home-leaving at twenty-three, Goldsmith, like Addison, was one of the lonely ones of the earth. Thackeray (Biographical Edition, VII. 607), citing lines 23-30, says: "When the lad . . . took leave of his parents and set out for Edinburgh, he saw mother and uncle and lazy Ballymahon and green native turf and sparkling river for the last time. He was never to look on old Ireland more, and only in fancy to revisit her."

Line 26. "Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view." Prior cites "The Vicar of Wakefield," Chap. XXIX., "Death, the only friend of the wretched, for a little while mocks the weary traveller with the view, and, like his horizon, still flies before him." Compare, too, "The Bee," I., "Letter from a Traveller" (Macmillan edition, 359): "When will my wanderings be at an end? When will my restless disposition give me leave to enjoy the present hour? When at Lyons, I thought all happiness lay beyond the Alps; when in Italy, I found myself still in want of something and expected to leave solicitude behind me by going into Romelia; and now you find me turning back, still expecting ease everywhere but where I am."

Lines 31-32. "'The Philosophic Wanderer,' in Hale's Vignette to the old quarto editions, surveys a conventional eighteenth-century landscape from an Alpine solitude composed of stage rocks and a fir tree." (Dobson, Great Writers Series, 99.)

Lines 37 f. The first edition reads here:—

"When thus creation's charms around combine,
Amidst the store, 'twere thankless to repine,
'Twere affectation all and school-taught pride,
To spurn the splendid things by heaven supply'd."

Line 41. "School-taught pride." "The pride which the Stoic feels in his conquest of himself and in his superiority to the casualties of life." (Rolfe.)

Lines 45-48. "Ye glittering towns," etc. This sort of apostrophe, emphasized by repetition and parallelism, is very common in the poetry of the eighteenth century. Pope writes ("Autumn," 27):—

"Ye flowers that droop, forsaken by the spring,
Ye birds that left by summer cease to sing,
Ye trees that fade when autumn-heats remove."

Line 48. "Bending swains." The "swain" is ever present in the "flowery vales" of classical verse. Note Pope's "Pastorals" and "The Deserted Village," 2, "The labouring swain." Gay in "The Shepherd's Week" amusingly rings the changes on this poetical name of "the rustic."

Line 50. "Creation's heir." Mark the ellipsis: "Inasmuch as I am Creation's heir, the world is mine."

Line 51. "Lone miser." No one has given a more favorable picture of this class of men than Goldsmith himself ("The Bee," III., Oct. 20, 1759): "Well were it for society had we more of this character among us. In general these close men are found at last the true benefactors of society."

Line 57. "Sorrows." "Signs of sorrows, tears." (Hales.)

Lines 61-62. This sentiment accords exactly with what Thackeray tells us of Goldsmith's practice (Biographical Edition, VII. 607): "The poor fellow was never so friendless but he could befriend some one; never so pinched and wretched but he could give his crust, and speak his word of compassion. . . . His purse and his heart were everybody's and his friends' as much as his own."

Line 66. The first edition reads here, "Boldly asserts that country for his own."

Line 68. First edition, "live-long."

Line 69. "At the line." The equator, called also the equinoctial line. The "Standard Dictionary," s.v. "Line," cites this passage.

Line 70. "Golden sands." Every one will recall Heber's—

"Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand."

Lines 73-74. Compare Goldsmith's "Essays," XI.: "We are now become so much Englishmen, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Spaniards, or Germans that we are no longer citizens of the world: so much the natives of one particular spot or members of one petty society that we no longer consider ourselves as the general inhabitants of the globe, etc."

Lines 75 f. The first edition reads:—

"And yet, perhaps, if states with states we scan,
Or estimate their bliss in Reason's plan,
Though patriots flatter and though fools contend,
We still shall find uncertainty suspend;
Find that each good, by art or nature given,

To these or those but makes the balance even ;
 Find that the bliss of all is much the same,
 And patriotic boasting reason's shame."

Lines 83-84. Omitted in first edition.

Line 84. "Idra's cliffs." Since Bolton Corney, all editors agree that the reference is to Idria, a town in the mountains of Carniola, famous for its mines.

Line 84. "Arno's shelvy side." Arno, the well-known river of Tuscany on whose gradually sloping (shelvy) banks Pisa and Florence lie, is mentioned a dozen times by Dante in his "Divine Comedy." He thus describes it ("Purgatorio," XIV. 16) : —

"Through midst of Tuscany there wanders
 A streamlet that is born in Fallerona,
 And not a hundred miles of course suffice it.

* * * * *

This maledict and misadventurous ditch."

(Longfellow's translation.)

Line 85. First edition reads : —

"And though rough rocks or gloomy summits frown."

Line 86. "Custom." This means nothing more than "use."

Line 87. "Art" is, of course, antithetical to "nature" (line 81). Johnson defines it as the power of doing something not taught by nature or instinct (Hales).

Line 88. "Commerce." First, third, and fourth editions read "splendours."

Line 90. "Either." Used for any one of five blessings — contrary to modern usage.

Lines 91-92. Omitted in first, third, and fourth editions.

Line 92. "Honor sinks where commerce long prevails." Compare Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," "And the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that honor feels."

Lines 93-94 recall the "ruling passion" of Pope's "Essay on Man."

Lines 93-94. "Hence every state to one loved blessing prone," etc. Compare Burke, "Brief on Conciliation," "Every nation has formed to itself some favorite point, which by way of eminence becomes the criterion of their happiness."

Line 99. "Try." First edition, "view."

Line 100. "The prospect as it lies." We must not forget the poet's point of view on his Alpine height.

Line 103. "Yon neglected shrub." Does not the epithet show indirectly Goldsmith's love of cultivated nature?

Line 105. "Apennine." This mountain range, the backbone of Italy, has been celebrated by poets from Virgil to Browning. ("Not a mountain rears its head unsung.")

Line 106. In this and the following lines, indeed in his whole description of Italy, Goldsmith seems to be indebted to Addison's "Letter from Italy," which he greatly admired. (See Introduction.)

Line 108. "Gay theartic pride." Mitford recalls several classical parallels to this phrase. Virgil had written ("Æneid," VI. 288) :— "Æneas advances to a grassy plain, which woods on winding hills enclosed around; and in the mid-valley was the circuit of a theatre."

Line 109. "Tops . . . mark." First edition reads, "top . . . marks."

Line 112. "Were surely blest." Mark mood and tense.

Lines 113-122. Compare with these lines Addison's "Letter," lines 55-60, 65-68 :—

"See how the golden groves around me smile,
That shun the coast of Britain's stormy isle,
Or, when transplanted and preserved with care,
Curse the cold clime and starve in northern air;
Here kindly warmth their mountain juice ferments.

* * * * *

Where western gales eternally reside,
And all the seasons lavish all their pride;
Blossoms and fruits and flowers together rise,
And the whole year in gay confusion lies."

Line 121. "Gelid." Certainly not "icy" here, but "of pleasing coolness."

Line 125. "Florid." The word is here employed in its primary meaning of "flowery." Such use recalls the poem of Dr. Holmes's Latin tutor ("The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table"). Compare "The Deserted Village," 390.

Line 126. Byron's line is suggested ("Bride of Abydos," I. 1), "And all save the spirit of man is divine."

Line 124 f. "And sensual bliss is all the nation knows." Addison simply touches upon the oppression and tyranny that made Italy

unhappy. But ever since Elizabeth's time Italian sensuality had been the theme of English pens: Ascham ("The Schoolmaster"), Lyly ("Euphues"), Nash ("Jack Wilton"). Compare, too, Byron's "Beppo." Luxury, vanity, and poverty are the chief faults of this people, according to Goldsmith's magnificent contemporary, Horace Walpole.

Line 127. "Manners." "In sense of Latin *mores*." (Hales.) "And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power." (Wordsworth, "Sonnet to Milton.")

Line 133. "Not far removed the date." An ellipsis. The meaning is simple, "'Twas not long ago."

Lines 135-138. These lines need no other commentary than the passage from Addison which inspired them ("Letter," 84 f.).

"The smooth chisel all its force has shown
And soften'd into flesh the rugged stone.

* * * * *

So warm with life his [Raphael's] blended colours glow.

* * * * *

Here domes and temples rise in distant views
And opening palaces invite my muse."

Lines 137-138. Pope has the same idea ("Imitation of Horace," Book II., Epistle I. 147):—

"Then marble softened into life grew warm,
And yielding metal flow'd to human form."

Thomson, "Liberty," IV. 211 :—

"From the brute rock it called the human form."

Lines 139-144. First edition omits lines 141-142, third and fourth editions, lines 143-144.

Line 142. "Unmanned." Depopulated.

Line 143. "Fruitless skill." Unavailing discernment. That is, "The nation learned with knowledge that came too late to aid."

Line 144. "Plethoric." This word is explained by Goldsmith himself, "The Citizen of the World" (cited by Mitford): "In short, the state resembled one of those bodies bloated with disease, whose bulk is only a symptom of its wretchedness; their former opulence only rendered them more impotent." Compare "The Deserted Village," 389-394.

Lines 145-146. First edition reads:—

“ Yet, though the fortune lost, here still abide
Some splendid arts, the wrecks of former pride.”

Line 150. “The pasteboard triumph.” Compare Goldsmith, “Present State of Polite Learning,” Chap. IV. “Happy country where the wits even of Rome are united into a rural group of nymphs and swains, under the appellation of modern Arcadians; where in the midst of porticos, processions, and cavalcades, abbés turned shepherds, and shepherdesses without sheep indulge their innocent *divertimenti*.”

Line 152. “A mistress or a saint in every grove.” An antithesis in the manner of Pope. Compare “The Rape of the Lock,” III., 158, “When husbands or when lapdogs breathe their last.”

Line 154. “The sports of children.” We find this story in Forster’s “Life” (1871, I. 347): “Sir Joshua Reynolds went out to call upon Goldsmith, he says, not having seen him for some time, and, no one answering at his door, he opened it without announcement and walked in. His friend was at his desk with hand uplifted, and a look directed to another part of the room, where a little dog sat with difficulty on his haunches, looking imploringly at its teacher, whose rebuke for toppling over he had evidently just received. Reynolds advanced and looked past Goldsmith’s shoulder at the writing on his desk. It seemed to be some portions of a poem, and, looking more closely, he was able to read a couplet which had been that instant written. The ink of the second line was wet.

‘By sports like these are all their cares beguil’d ;
The sports of children satisfy the child.’ ”

Line 154. This was followed in the first edition by:—

“ At sports like these while foreign arms advance
In passive ease they leave the world to chance.” ”

Line 155. The first edition reads:—

“ While struggling virtue sinks by long control,
She leaves at last or feebly mans the soul.” ”

Later editions through the fifth change this to:—

“ When noble aims have suffered long control
They sink at last or feebly man the soul.” ”

Line 159. “Domes.” In its etymological meaning of house, mansion, palace. Compare “The Deserted Village,” 319.

Lines 159–160. These two lines are full of the romantic feeling of the next century, the world-sorrow, the sympathy with the sufferings of humanity that always finds a voice amid old ruins and the memories of buried greatness. Madame de Staël's "Corinne" or "Italy" overflows with this sentiment. Heine, the German poet, says in his "Pictures of his Italian Journey" (Embden's "Family Life of Heine," De Kay's translation, Cassell, p. 53): "The very stones speak here, and I understand their silent tongue. Any broken column belonging to the days of Rome, any mouldering tower of the Lombards, any weather-worn clustered Gothic pier, knows very well what I mean." And finally Byron, "Manfred," Act III., Scene iv.:—

"Cæsar's chambers and the Augustan halls
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay."

Line 161. "There in the ruin." Dr. Smollett writes of Rome, Feb. 28, 1765 ("Travels through France and Italy") : "The miserable houses and even garden walls of the peasants in this district are built with these precious materials, I mean shafts and capitals of marble columns, heads, arms, legs, and mutilated trunks of statues."

Line 163. "And, wondering man could want," etc. "Wondering" does not qualify "man," but is to be taken with peasant (162), the subject of "exults" and "owns" (164). The conjunction "that" must be supplied in thought before "man."

Line 167. Note in this and the following lines the indifference to, indeed the shrinking from, wild nature, so characteristic of Goldsmith's time. As Ruskin points out, even Shakespeare abhorred mountains; and to Thomas Gray is usually assigned the distinction of being the first Englishman to appreciate their beauties. But at least three years before Gray penned his enthusiastic sketch of the mountains of the Chartreuse, James Thomson wrote in his "Liberty," IV. 344–348 :—

"Their shaggy mountains charm
More than or Gallic, or Italian plains ;
And sickening fancy oft, when absent long,
Pines to behold their Alpine views again."

The lines that follow are as romantic as any from Byron or Coleridge.

Line 167. "The bleak Swiss." Collins, like Wordsworth and Tennyson later, celebrates in his "Ode to Liberty" (1747), "Wild Helvetia's mountain bleak" as the stronghold of freedom. But, throughout this part of his poem, Goldsmith doubtless recalled Thomson's "Liberty," IV. 335–343 :—

“ For valor, faith, and innocence of life,
 Renowned, a rough, laborious people there,
 Not only give the dreadful Alps to smile,
 And press their culture on retiring snows,
 But, to firm order trained and patient war,
 They likewise know, beyond the nerve remiss
 Of mercenary force, how to defend
 The tasteful little their hard toil has earned,
 And the proud arm of Bourbon to defy.”

Line 167. “ Mansions.” All the early editions read “ mansions ” here, but Mitford, Irving, and Masson prefer the singular. In any case, the word means nothing more than “ abode.” (Compare line 201.)

Line 170. “ But man and steel, the soldier and his sword.” The Swiss had early proved themselves mighty men of arms in their strife with the Austrians (see Schiller’s “ *Wilhelm Tell* ”). For three hundred years before Goldsmith, they had served for pay in the armies of Europe, but the greatest and the most fatal triumph of Swiss mercenaries was to come in the palace of Louis XVI., nearly twenty years after Goldsmith’s death. Thorwaldsen’s “ *Lion of Lucerne* ” is the noblest tribute to this feat and to Helvetian fidelity and honor.

Line 171. “ Vernal.” A favorite word of eighteenth-century poets. Pope speaks of “ vernal airs ” in his “ *Pastoral on Spring*, ” line 5.

Line 173. “ Sues.” The early editions read here “ soothes, ” but the word of wooing is more applicable to the nature of zephyrs.

Line 176. “ Redress.” To compensate for. The word has undergone little change in meaning.

Line 182. “ Vegetable meal.” In these lines Goldsmith is contrasting the lots of Swiss peasants and those of other countries. “ In a large number of the French provinces the use of meat was unknown. ‘ For three-fourths of the population of France, ’ says a writer about 1760, ‘ the consumption of meat does not amount to more than a monthly average of a pound per head.’ ” (Duruy, “ *History of France*, ” Carey’s translation, p. 515.)

Line 186. “ Breasts.” This is the reading of the earliest editions, and is accepted by such editors as Rolfe and Dobson. Johnson quotes the line in his Dictionary, s.v. “ *Breast*, ” and Forster praises the reading in his “ *Life of Goldsmith*, ” 1871, I. 69. “ It is enough to make the angels weep, ” says Black (“ *Life of Goldsmith*, ” p. 72), “ to

find such a couplet murdered in several editions of Goldsmith's works (Mitford, Masson, etc.) by the substitution of the commonplace 'breathes' for 'breasts.'"

Line 187. "The finny deep." Mitford draws attention to Goldsmith's words in "The Citizen of the World," "The best manner to draw up the finny prey" (fish).

Line 190. "The struggling savage." Used here of wild beast. Goldsmith says, in "The Citizen of the World" (cited by Mitford). "He is a beast of prey, and the laws should make use of as many stratagems and as much force to drive the *reluctant savage* into the toils as the Indians when they hunt the hyena or the rhinoceros." Thomson's "Liberty," IV. 596-598:—

"No savage Alp, the den
Of wolves and bears, and monstrous things obscene,
That vex the swain and waste the country round."

Line 191. "Every labour sped." "Successfully concluded." Compare "God you speed" of Chaucer's prologue to "Canterbury Tales," line 759. There, and in Anglo-Saxon, where the word is common, it carries no idea of quickness, but of prosperity.

Lines 192 f. suggest Burns's picture of a Scotch fireside ("The Cotter's Saturday Night") :—

"His wee bit ingle blinkin' bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant Prattling on his knee," etc.

Line 198. "Nightly." Of or pertaining to the night—("Standard" cites Whittier's "nightly chores")—not to a succession of nights or every night. Often so used by Milton and Shakespeare.

Line 200. "The patriot passion." The ruling passion of each class of men is discussed by Pope in his "Essay on Man" and "Moral Essays."

Lines 201-202. Omitted in first edition of poem.

Line 205. "Child." The earliest editions here read "babe."

Lines 209 f. Goldsmith considers this theme in cold prose, "The Citizen of the World," XI. (Macmillan edition, p. 101): "The more various our artificial necessities, the wider is our circle of pleasure; for all pleasures consist in obviating necessities as they rise; luxury, therefore, as it increases our wants, increases our capacity for happiness."

Lines 213-214. Mitford cites Goldsmith's "Animated Nature," edition 1774, II. 123, "Every want becomes a means of pleasure in the redressing." "Redrest" means "supplied."

Line 215. "Science." This seems here and in many of Goldsmith's prose essays to mean little more than "knowledge."

Line 217. "Unknown." Ellipsis. "It is unknown to them," or "they do not know how."

Line 221. "Level." Monotonous. Compare line 359.

Lines 228, 235. "Morals." Like the Latin *mores*, the word is synonymous with manners (line 230).

Line 228. "Low." Used here probably in eighteenth-century sense of coarse and vulgar. Fielding employs the word frequently in his "Jonathan Wild," "We must not detain the reader too long with these *low* characters;" and Richardson calls Tom Jones "the *lowest* of fellows." Goldsmith, according to Colman, drove the word out of contemporary criticism. (Dobson.)

Lines 233-238. The simile here introduced complies with all the conditions which, according to Goldsmith himself (Essay XVI., Macmillan edition, p. 336), should govern that figure. "It is apt, striking, properly pursued, and adorned with all the graces of poetical melody." The change of "our" (first edition) to "the" improves greatly the movement of line 236.

Lines 243 f. These lines have an intense autobiographical interest. "I had some knowledge of music, with a tolerable voice," he says through the mouth of George Primrose, in "The Vicar of Wakefield" (Chap. XX.). "I now turned what was once my amusement into a present means of subsistence. I passed among the harmless peasants of Flanders and among such of the French as were poor enough to be very merry; for I ever found them sprightly in proportion to their wants. Whenever I approached a peasant's house towards nightfall I played one of my most merry tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging but subsistence for the next day."

Line 244. "Loire." This river, the longest in France, rises in the Cevennes Mountains, flows in a north-northwest course to Orleans (forever associated in our minds with Joan of Arc), then southwest through the beautiful country of chateaux and cliff-dwellings by Blois to Tours—after this due west to the Bay of Biscay.

Lines 244, 247-248 show how poorly Goldsmith rated his musical performances. In "The Vicar of Wakefield" (Chap. XX.) he tells us that "people of fashion thought his playing odious, and that in Italy every peasant was a better musician than he." "Sir John Hawkins

writes, in allusion to the performance of the poet on the German flute, 'He understood not the character in which music is written and played on that instrument as many of the vulgar do, merely by ear.' " (Prior, "Life of Goldsmith," 1837, p. 217.)

Lines 249 f. This picture of the brighter side of French peasant life recalls two final chapters of Sterne's "Tristram Shandy," Vol. VII., written just about this time. "In these sportive plains and under this genial sun, where at this instant all flesh is running out piping, fiddling, and dancing to the vintage and every step that's taken, the judgment is surprised by the imagination," etc.

Line 253. "Gestic lore." "Traditional gestures or motions of the body." (Dobson.) All editors point to Scott's "Peveril of the Peak" (Chap. XXX.), "He [Charles II.] seemed like herself [Fenella] carried away by the enthusiasm of the *gestic art*."

Line 256. "Idly busy." Compare Pope, "Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady," line 81, "Life's *idle business* at one gasp be o'er." (Rolfe.)

Lines 257 f. Goldsmith furnishes the best commentary upon these lines ("Present State of Polite Learning," VI.): "Their [French] encouragements to merit are more skilfully directed; the link of patronage and learning still continues unbroken. The French nobility have certainly a most pleasing way of satisfying the vanity of an author without indulging his avarice. A man of literary merit is sure of being caressed by the great, though seldom enriched."

Lines 265, 266. The splendid compactness of Goldsmith's best manner is illustrated in these lines, as heavily weighted with meaning as any in the poem.

Line 273. "Tawdry." Showy but without taste; gaudy. "It was first used in the phrase, 'tawdry lace,' — a rustic necklace; explained in Skinner as being a necklace bought at St. Awdry's fair, held in the Isle of Ely, on St. Awdry's (St. Etheldrida's) day, October 17" (Skeat, "Etymological Dictionary," s.v.). It is worth while to note that in the first edition of "The Traveller," the word is not introduced to qualify the "lampoons" of the poet, mentioned in the Dedication.

Lines 273-274. Writing from Paris, Oct. 12, 1763 ("Travels through France and Italy," Letter VII.), Dr. Smollett says, "Vanity and ostentation, engrossing all their funds, utterly disable them from exerting the virtues of beneficence."

Line 276. "Frieze." "A coarse woollen cloth with a shaggy nap on one side." ("Standard.")

Line 277. "Cheer." Allowance of food. A favorite word of Sir Walter Scott.

Lines 281 f. Prior, "Life of Goldsmith," 1837, p. 276, points to "Animated Nature," edition 1774, I. 276: "But we need scarce mention these, when we find that the whole kingdom of Holland seems to be a conquest from the sea, and in a manner rescued from its bosom. The surface of the earth in this country is below the level of the bed of the sea; and I remember upon approaching the coast to have looked down upon it from the sea, as into a valley."

Lines 283, 287. "Methinks." "It seems to me." The verbal part of the compound is derived from Anglo-Saxon *Thyncan*, to seem, not *Thencan*, to think; and the "Me" represents the dative, with the impersonal construction.

Line 286. "Rampire." Synonym of rampart (Old English *rem-part*, *rempar*). Shakespeare speaks of "rampir'd gates" ("Timon of Athens," V. iv. 47). Here the word refers to the dikes, "the firm connected bulwark" (line 288).

Line 291. The first edition reads: "While ocean pent and rising o'er the pile."

Lines 293-294. Compare Scott, "Marmion," Introduction to Canto III. :—

"Content to rear his [the Belgian's] whiten'd wall
Beside the dank and dull canal,
He'll say from youth, he loved to see
The white sail gliding by the tree."

Like Goldsmith, Scott confuses the Dutch and the Belgians.

Line 297. "Wave-subjected." Lying below the surface of the sea.

Lines 301 ff. It is interesting to compare with this passage the opening stanzas of Dryden's "Annus Mirabilis," 1666.

"In thriving arts long time had Holland grown,
Crouching at home and cruel when abroad.

* * * * *

Trade which like blood should circularly flow,
Stopped in their channels, found its freedom lost;
Thither the wealth of all the world did go
And seemed but shipwrecked on so base a coast."

Line 303. "Are." The verb is here attracted from its correct singular form by the seeming plurality of subject.

Line 309. This line appears *verbatim* in the prose of "The Citizen of the World," XXXIV. (Mitford.)

Lines 313 f. Prior cites from Goldsmith's manuscript introduction

to "The History of the War": "How unlike the brave peasants, their ancestors, who spread terror into either India, and always declared themselves the allies of those who drew the sword in defence of freedom!"

Line 317. "Genius." "My guiding spirit." Perhaps merely the poet's muse.

Line 319. "Arcadian." Arcadia, a fertile province of Greece, became, in the writing of the Renaissance, the scene of all pastoral romances. Sir Philip Sidney and many others celebrate its ideal beauty. The pastoral Arcadia of course lies "out of space, out of time."

Line 320. "Hydaspes." Sung by Horace and Virgil. It is the modern Jelum, a river of Punjab in India.

Line 324. "Extremes are only in the master's mind." Extreme heat and cold exist only in fancy; so equable is the climate.

Lines 327-328. These two noble lines appear in reverse order in the first edition. Mark the gain in climax by the change to periodic structure.

Line 333. "Boasts these rights to scan." Boasts that he scans these rights.

Lines 335 f. Apostrophes to freedom are very common in English verse, particularly in the poems of Goldsmith's own century. William Collins had written (1747) a magnificent "Ode to Liberty" ("The Traveller," note to line 167). But our poet was chiefly indebted to Addison's "Letter from Italy," 120-158, and to Thomson's "Liberty," V., where he found lavish praise of British independence.

Lines 339 f. "I remember," says Edmund Burke ("The Cause of Present Discontents," 1770), "an old scholastic aphorism, which says, 'that the man who lives detached from others, must be either an angel or a devil.' When I see in any of these *detached gentlemen of our times* [Compare Goldsmith's "self-dependent lordlings"] the angelic purity, power and beneficence, I shall admit them to be angels. In the meantime we are born only to be men. It is therefore our business . . . to bring the dispositions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the commonwealth; so to be patriots as not to forget we are gentlemen." (Compare line 357.)

Lines 341-344. The first edition reads, in place of these four lines:—

"See, though by circling deeps together held,
Minds combat minds, repelling and repell'd."

Line 345. Rolfe explains "ferments" as "political agitations," and "imprison'd" as "kept within the bonds of law."

Line 351. "Fictitious bonds." "Artificial bonds," as opposed to "Nature's ties" (first edition, "social bonds").

Line 356. "The nurse of arms." Thomson, "Liberty," V. 81-82, calls Britain:—

"Great nurse of fruits, of flocks, of commerce, She!
Great nurse of men."

Line 357. "Noble stems." Men of noble race. Great families.

Line 358. "Wrote." A common past participle form in Goldsmith's day. Gray's "Elegy" was advertised by Dodsley as "wrote in a country churchyard."

Line 361 f. Mitford cites Goldsmith's preface to "History of England": "In the things I have hitherto written, I have neither allured the vanity of the great by flattery, nor satisfied the malignity of the vulgar by scandal, but I have endeavored to get an honest reputation by liberal pursuits."

Line 362. "To flatter kings." "'In such a state as ours,' said Johnson, 'who would not wish to please the chief magistrate?' 'I do wish to please him,' replied Goldsmith. 'I remember a line in Dryden,

"And every poet is the monarch's friend."

It ought to be reversed.''" (Boswell's "Life of Johnson," a^o 1773.)

Line 362. "Court the great." "As for myself," said Goldsmith, after refusing the patronage of the Earl of Northumberland, "I have no great dependence on the promises of great men: I look to the booksellers for support; they are my best friends, and I am not inclined to desert them for others."

Lines 363-380. In place of these, the first edition gives two lines only:—

"Perish the wish, for, inly satisfy'd,
Above their pomps I hold my ragged pride."

Forster believes that Goldsmith omitted "the ragged pride" because it involved an undignified admission. (Introduction.)

Lines 375-376. "Hence should one order," etc. This is exactly in the manner of Pope's "Essay on Man."

Line 382. "Contracting regal power." Goldsmith argues against the diminution of kingly power both in the preface to the "History

of England" and in "The Vicar of Wakefield." At this time George III., an ardent believer in the divine right of kings, backed by the Tories, was fighting successfully against the two divisions of the Whigs.

Line 386. "Laws grind the poor," etc. Mitford cites "The Vicar of Wakefield," XIX., "What we may then expect may be seen by turning our eyes to Holland, Genoa, or Venice, where the *laws govern the poor and the rich govern the law.*"

Lines 397-412. These lines contain the central thought of "The Deserted Village," which appeared five years after "The Traveller."

Line 410. "To traverse climes beyond the western main." Compare "The Deserted Village," 368, "For seats like these beyond the western main."

Line 411. "Oswego." A river in western New York, running northwest between Lakes Oneida and Ontario.

Line 412. "Niagara." The famous Falls of Niagara. Rolfe, citing Lippincott's Gazetteer, remarks that the accent was originally on the penult, as here. "It has been observed, also, that Goldsmith was the first to introduce into English poetry sonorous American, or rather Indian, names." (Black, "Life of Goldsmith," Chap. IX.)

Lines 410-422. This passage is amplified, "The Deserted Village," 341-362.

Line 416. "Marks with murderous aim." Notice the improvement from "takes a deadly aim" of the early editions. The horrors of the French and Indian war were fresh in the minds of Englishmen when Goldsmith wrote. Compare "The Deserted Village," 356.

Line 421. "Long." The early editions read "fond."

Lines 420, 429-434, 437-438. These lines were written by Dr. Johnson (Boswell's "Life of Johnson," α^o 1776). Lines 429-430 recall one of his precepts in "Rasselas," "A king has the care of only a few millions, to whom he cannot do much good or harm." (Dobson.)

Line 436. "Luke's iron crown." In a rebellion in Hungary in 1514, headed by two brothers, George and Luke Doza (not Zeck, as Goldsmith thought), the former was punished on its suppression by having his head encircled with a red-hot iron crown. "The name of the actual sufferer, George, might have been misconstrued by those who knew not the historical fact, as implying some sneer or irreverence to his own sovereign." (Prior, "Life of Goldsmith," 1837, 271.)

Line 436. "Damiens' bed of steel." Robert François Damiens was tortured and executed in 1757 for attempting to assassinate Louis

XV. of France. "Being conducted to the Conciergerie, an iron bed, which likewise served for a chair, was prepared for him, and in this he was fastened with chains. The torture was again applied and a physician ordered to attend to see what degree of pain he could support." (Smollett, "History of England," III., Chap. VII., cited by Dobson.)

Line 437. "But rarely known." This phrase modifies "the lifted axe," etc., the subjects of "leave."

NOTES.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

Line 1. "Sweet Auburn." The name was obtained by Goldsmith from his friend, Bennett Langton. (Forster, "Life," II. 206.) There is an Aldbourn, or Auburn, in Wiltshire, near Marlborough, but this cannot be Goldsmith's village. See Introduction.

Lines 2-4. These lines are in the best manner of the classical school. For use of "parting," compare Gray, "Elegy," 1, "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day."

Line 6. "Seats of my youth." "Seat" is used in the sense of "abode." (Compare, "a gentleman's seat," "county seat.") Goldsmith here identifies Auburn with Lissoy. For word, see "Deserted Village," 281, 368.

Line 7. "Thy green." This recalls Tennyson's stanza ("In Memoriam," LXIV.), true in part of Goldsmith himself:—

" Some divinely gifted man
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green."

Lines 5-15. "Ten lines, from the fifth to the fifteenth, had been his second morning's work; and when Cooke entered his chamber, he read them to him aloud. 'Come,' he added, 'let me tell you this is no bad morning's work; and now, my dear boy, if you are not better engaged, I should be glad to enjoy Shoemaker's Holiday with you.' " (Forster, "Life," II. 118.)

Lines 9 f. "The pool, the busy mill, the house where 'nut-brown draughts inspired' are still visited as the poetic scene, and the 'hawthorn bush' growing in an open space in front of the house which I knew to have three trunks, is now reduced to one, the other two having been cut, from time to time, by persons carrying pieces of it away to be made into toys, etc., in honour of the bard and the celebrity of his poem. All these contribute to the same proof, and

the 'decent church' which I attended for upwards of eighteen years, and which 'tops the neighbouring hill,' is exactly described as seen from Lissoy, the residence of the preacher." (Dr. Streat, Dec. 31, 1807 — curate of Kilkenny West, quoted by Forster, "Life," II. 207.)

Line 10. "The shelter'd cot." "Mine be a cot beside the hill . . . A willowy brook that turns the mill." (Samuel Rogers, "A Wish.")

Line 12. "Decent." Comely, pretty, yet unobtrusive (the Latin, *decens*).

Lines 13-14. Strange to say, no edition recalls Milton, "L'Allegro," 67-68 : —

" And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale."

(Not a tale of love, but a reckoning of sheep.)

Lines 15-16. "The coming day." "The holiday (Roman Catholic Sunday or Feast-day) when the remission of toil permitted play to have its turn."

Line 17. "Train." Apparently Goldsmith's hardest-worked word. (He uses it eight times in this poem alone, — Lines 17, 63, 81, 135, 149, 252, 320, 337.)

Line 20. "The young contending." The absolute participle appears fifteen times in Goldsmith's poetry, thirty-two times in his prose. (Ross, "Absolute Participle in English," Balt., 1893.) See "Deserted Village," 110, 297, 393. The line suggests one of the closing scenes in the life of Sir Richard Steele. "He would often be carried out in a summer's evening, where the country lads and lasses were assembled at their rural sports, and with his pencil give an order on his agent, the mercer, for a new gown to the best dancer." (Victor's Letters, Dobson, "Life of Steele," 211.) Rustic pleasures are the theme of Gay, "The Shepherd's Week."

Line 22. "Sleights of art." Feats of dexterity. Compare Butler, "Hudibras," II., III. 4 : —

"Lookers-on feel most delight
That least perceive a juggler's *sleight*,
And still the less they understand
The more th' admire his *sleight of hand*."

Line 25. "Simply." In a simple manner, naïvely.

Line 27. "Mistrustless." Unconscious, with no suspicion.

Line 29. "Virgin." A very common synonym for "girl" in eighteenth-century poetry.

Line 29. "Sidelong." "Middle English adverbs were formed ending in -l-ing, as head-l-ing, head-foremost, afterward altered to headlong, probably by confusion with long. So also darkling, i.e., in the dark; flat-l-ing or flat-long, flat; side-l-ing or side-long, side-ways." (Skeat, "Principles of English Etymology," First Series, p. 275.)

Line 35. "Lawn." Chaucer uses "launde" in the sense of "a grassy clearing," "glade," "plain surrounded by trees." As used by Pope ("Here opes the fertile lawn") and Goldsmith, the word is a synonym for "plain." ("Deserted Village," l. 1.) Compare l. 65.

Line 37. "The poem of 'The Deserted Village' took its origin from the circumstance of General Robert Napper having purchased an extensive tract of the country surrounding Lissoy or Auburn; in consequence of which many families, here called cottiers, were removed to make room for the intended improvements of what was now to become the wide domain of a rich man." (Dr. Strean, cited above.)

Line 39. "One only master." See l. 275 f.

Line 40. "Stints thy smiling plain." "Deprives thy plain of the beauty and luxuriousness which once characterized it." (Hales.) Compare "Deserted Village," l. 280.

Line 42. "Works its weedy way." Mark the alliteration, and compare "Deserted Village," ll. 58, 74, 93, 103-104, 119, 121, 192, 422.

Line 44. "The hollow-sounding bittern." Prior cites Goldsmith, "Animated Nature," Vol. VI. : "Those who have walked in an evening by the sedgy sides of unfrequented rivers must remember a variety of notes from different water-fowl, — the loud scream of the wild goose, the croaking of the mallard, the whining of the lapwing ["Deserted Village," ll. 45-46], and the tremulous neighing of the jack-snipe; but of all these sounds there is none so dismally hollow as the booming of the bittern. . . . It is like an interrupted bellowing of a bull, but hollower and louder, and is heard at a mile's distance, as if issuing from some formidable being that resided at the bottom of the waters. I remember in the place where I was a boy with what terror this bird's note affected the whole village; they considered it as a presage of some sad event, and generally found or made one to succeed it.".

Lines 47-48. Goldsmith must surely have read Ossian's description of the fall of Balclutha, published in 1762: "The rank grass of the wall waved round its head."

Line 51. "Ill . . . ill." This careless repetition is condemned by Hales. For other cacophonies note "The Traveller," 16-21, 48-52.

Line 52. "Decay." Decrease in numbers (?).

Lines 53-54. "Princes and lords," etc. Mitford cites Gower's "Confessio Amantis": —

"A kynge may make a lord a knave,
And of a knave a lord also."

Hales refers to Burns, "The Cotter's Saturday Night," l. 165, "Princes and lords are but the breath of kings," and in his "For a' that and a' that," the line "A prince can make a belted knight." But Prior finds the equivalent of the second line in the old French poet, De Caux, "Un souffle peut détruire et (qu') un souffle a produit."

Line 57. "England's griefs." Whether Auburn be Lissoy or no, Goldsmith is certainly not now thinking of Ireland.

Lines 57-62. Bishop Hugh Latimer illustrates this happy time by his reminiscences of his childhood in a sermon preached about 1550. (Craik, "English Prose," I. 227.) "My father was a yeoman, and had no lands of his own, only he had a farm of three or four pound by year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He had walk for a hundred sheep; and my mother milked thirty kine. . . . He kept hospitality for his poor neighbors and some alms he gave to the poor." The sixteenth century bishop, in words that are much like Goldsmith's, shows that this old yeomanry had decayed on account of the rise of a new class of landlords. "All the enhancing and rearing goeth to your private commodity and wealth."

Line 67. "Opulence." First edition, "luxury"—a significant reading, as Goldsmith identifies this with "trade."

Line 74. "Manners." See "The Traveller," 127.

Line 79. "And, many a year elapsed, returned to view." This visit was an imaginary one, for Goldsmith was never in Ireland after 1752. (See note to "The Traveller," l. 24.) But the identity of Auburn and Lissoy cannot be pressed at every point. (Introduction.)

Line 80. "Where once the cottage stood." This line was followed in first edition by a couplet: —

"Here as with doubtful, pensive steps I range,
Trace every scene and wonder at the change."

Line 83. "In all my wanderings." Compare "The Traveller," 24.

Lines 87-88. First edition reads: —

" My anxious day to husband near the close
 And keep life's flame from wasting by repose."

Line 87. "To husband out." Here given its ordinary English meaning, to use with economy. "Husband," the noun, in the sense of economist, is a favorite word with Emerson.

Line 96. "Here to return—and die at home at last." "This thought was continually at his heart. He writes in 'The Citizen of the World,' Letter CIII., 'There is something so seducing in that spot in which we first had existence that nothing but it can please. Whatever vicissitudes we experience in life, however we toil or wheresoever we wander, our fatigued wishes still recur to home for tranquillity; we long to die in that spot which gave us birth and in that pleasing expectation find an opiate for every calamity.'" (Forster, "Life," II. 202.)

Line 99. "How happy he." First edition reads, "How blest is he."

Line 102. Mitford cites "The Bee," "By struggling with misfortunes we are sure to receive some wounds in the conflict; the only method to come off victorious is by running away."

Line 105. "In guilty state." Not "in state of guilt," but "in evil pomp."

Line 107. "His latter end." A common biblical phrase. Prov. xix. 20; Job viii. 7.

Line 109. "Bends." First edition, "sinks." Unperceived decay." Dobson compares Johnson, "Vanity of Human Wishes," I. 293, "An age that melts in unperceived decay."

Line 110. "Resignation." "Sir Joshua Reynolds from this passage took the idea of his painting of 'Resignation,' of which, an engraving being taken, he thus inscribed it to the poet: 'This attempt to express a character in "The Deserted Village" is dedicated to Dr. Goldsmith by his sincere friend and admirer, Joshua Reynolds.'" (Prior.)

Line 115. "Careless." Free from care.

Line 118. "To meet their young." The verb is not the infinitive of purpose ("in order to meet"), but the gerund ("at meeting"). This form is very common in Shakespeare: "Merchant of Venice," I. i. 40, "Antonio is sad to think (in thinking) upon his merchandise;" Id. I. i. 126, "Make moan to be abridged" (about being abridged). (Abbott, "Shakespearian Grammar," Sec. 356.) Compare Goldsmith's use of infinitive, "Deserted Village," ll. 145, 161, 195, 293, etc.

Line 121. "The watch-dog's voice." Compare Byron, "Don Juan," I. CXXIII. : —

" 'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home."

Line 121. "Whispering wind." Epithet and noun are frequently associated for onomatopoetic effect.

"Where'er you find the cooling western breeze,
In the next line it 'whispers through the trees.'"
(Pope, "Essay on Criticism," 351-352.)

Line 122. "Vacant mind." Not "devoid of intelligence," but "free from care or serious thought." The phrase is Shakespearian; all editions point to "Henry V.," IV. i. 254. Note its recurrence, "Deserted Village," 257.

Line 124. "And filled each pause the nightingale had made." Goldsmith says in "Animated Nature," 1774, V. 329, "The nightingale's pausing song would be the proper epithet for this bird's music." (Mitford.) Rolfe notes that the nightingale does not sing in Ireland.

Line 126. "Fluctuate." In his essay on "Metaphors" (Essay XVI., Macmillan edition 1899, p. 331), Goldsmith says, "Armstrong has used the word *fluctuate* with admirable efficacy in his philosophical poem, 'The Art of Preserving Health,' 'The sounding forest fluctuates in the storm.' The word *fluctuate* on this occasion not only exhibits an idea of struggling, but also echoes the sense," etc.

Line 130. "Plashy." "Full of shallow, standing water" ("Standard").

Line 131. "Wretched matron." According to Dr. Strean, the poor widow was one Catherine Giraghty. "To this day, 1807, the brook and ditches near the spot where her cabin stood abound with cresses . . . and her children live in the neighborhood." She recalls to me Wordsworth's Goody Blake in the line, "To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn."

Line 135. "She only left," etc. Compare Gray's "Death of Hoel," 23-24: —

"And I, the meanest of them all,
That live to weep and sing their fall."

Line 137. "Copse." A thicket or a wood of small trees.

Line 140. "The village preacher." Goldsmith's brother, Henry, to whom he had dedicated "The Traveller," had died at Athlone in

May, 1768, at the age of forty-five. "Shortly after he had tidings of his loss the character of the Village Preacher was most probably written. . . . From his father and brother alike (perhaps from Uncle Contarine, too) were drawn the exquisite features of this sketch; but of the so recent grief we may find marked and unquestionable trace, as well in the sublime and solemn image at the close as in those opening allusions to Henry's unworldly contentedness," etc. (Forster, "Life," II. 113.) "Forty pounds a year" (l. 142) was Henry Goldsmith's income. (Dedication to "The Traveller.")

Lines 140 f. Chaucer's "Poor Parson" (prologue to "Canterbury Tales," 477-528) is very like Goldsmith's "Village Preacher": (1) He is poor in worldly goods, but "rich in holy thought and work." (2) He is content in his wretched and remote parish. (3) He is full of pity for sinful man, visiting his flock in sickness and in sorrow. (4) He is charitable to his parishioners, giving freely of his scanty substance. (5) His practice conforms to his teaching, "He taught Christ's lore, but first he followed it himself." The Irish trait of hospitality that, in the opinion of many, gives Goldsmith's preacher "a local habitation," is not drawn in Chaucer's sketch.

Line 142. "Passing." Surpassingly, exceedingly,—as in Shakespeare's "passing strange."

Line 145. "Unpractis'd." First edition, "Unskilful."

Line 148. "More skilled." First edition, "more bent."

Line 149. "His house was known to all the vagrant train." Prior cites Leland's "History of Ireland," 1773, I. 36: "Even the lowest of the people claimed reception and refreshment by an almost perfect right, and so ineffectual is the flux of many centuries to efface the ancient manners of a people that at this day the wandering beggar enters the house of a farmer or gentleman with as much ease and freedom as an inmate."

Line 155. "The broken soldier." Perhaps Goldsmith has in mind one trait of his early teacher, the veteran Paddy Byrne,—the original of the "Village Master" (ll. 193-216),—his love of recalling and romancing anent deeds done in war time and in other lands.

Line 159. "To glow." Here, "to become eagerly sympathetic."

Line 178. "His looks," etc. Compare Dryden's version of Chaucer's "Poor Parson," ll. 3, 17-18:—

"His eyes diffused a venerable grace."

"With eloquence innate his tongue was armed,
Though harsh the precept, yet the teacher charmed,"

Line 182. "With steady zeal." First edition, "ready zeal."

Line 183. "Even children followed." Lovers of Whittier will remember his description of Samuel Sewall: —

"The grace of Christian gentleness,
The face that a child would climb to kiss ;
True and tender and brave and just,
That man might honor and woman trust."

Line 186. "Their welfare." The "Village Preacher" does not forget his Master's words (Mark ix. 37), "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name receiveth me."

Line 188. "But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven." Compare Tennyson, "Sir Galahad," "But all my heart is drawn above."

Line 189. "As some tall cliff." This simile, rightly among the most admired in English poetry, has been traced by some to the Latin, Lucan, Statius, or Claudian, by others to the French, Chaperlain (1595-1674) or Abbé de Chaulieu (1639-1720). Mitford points to Young, "Night Thoughts." A source hunt of this sort, while suggestive, proves little. Goldsmith's figure may have been framed without any knowledge of these — his genius was surely equal to that.

Line 196. "The village master." Thomas (Paddy) Byrne. (See Life, and Note to "Deserted Village," l. 155.)

Line 198. "I knew him well." Goldsmith was not the good boy of his school.

Line 200. "Morning face." No editor seems to have thought of the picture the poet surely had in mind, — the "shining morning face" of "the whining schoolboy" in Shakespeare's *Seven Ages*, "As You Like It," II. vii. 144.

Lines 205-206. "Aught . . . fault." Editors have drawn from Walker, "Rhyming Dictionary," a similar rhyme in Pope: —

"Before his sacred name flies every fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought."

Goldsmith rhymes "fault" with "sought" ("Edwin and Angelina," XXXV.) and with "caught" ("Retaliation," 73-74). Perhaps Goldsmith employed the suggested pronunciation — found even at this day in many English dialects.

Line 209. "Terms and tides." "Terms," the terms of court, the legal year being formerly so divided; "tides," the seasons.

Line 210. "Gauge." To measure the capacity of barrels.

Lines 220-237. "The ale-house has been rebuilt by the poet's relative, Mr. Hogan, and supplied with the sign of the 'Three Jolly Pigeons,' with new copies of the 'Twelve Golden Rules' and the 'Royal Game of Goose,' not omitting the 'broken tea cups wisely kept for show.'" (Prior, "Life," 1837, Chap. XIX.)

Line 221. "Nut-brown draughts." Compare Milton, "L'Allegro," 100, "Then to the spicy nut-brown ale," and the famous drinking song in "Gammer Gurton's Needle," Act II. (1562), "Backe and syde, go bare":—

"I love no rost but a nut-brown toste."

The "Nut-brown maid" of the old ballad will be remembered.

Line 226. "Parlour," a derivative of French *parler* (to speak), "originally denoted the speaking-room of a monastery — that is, the room where conversation is allowed." (Hales.)

Lines 227-236. Compare with this attractive picture of a tavern the following lines from Goldsmith, "Description of an Author's Bedchamber," 1760 (slightly altered from a poetical passage in a letter to his brother Henry, 1759), and mark how a few changes of epithet have completely transformed a dirty interior:—

"A window patched with paper lent a ray
That dimly showed the state in which he lay ;
The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread,
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread ;
The royal game of goose was there in view,
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew.
The seasons framed with listing found a place,
And brave Prince William show'd his lamp-black face ;
The morn was cold, — he views with keen desire
The rusty grate, unconscious of a fire.
With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,
And five crack'd teacups dress'd the chimney board."

Line 232. "The twelve good rules." These rules, supposedly framed by King Charles I., were as follows: (1) Urge no healths; (2) Profane no divine ordinances; (3) Touch no state matters; (4) Reveal no secrets; (5) Pick no quarrels; (6) Make no comparisons; (7) Maintain no ill opinions; (8) Keep no bad company; (9) Encourage no vice; (10) Make no long meals; (11) Repeat no grievances; (12) Lay no wagers. It has often been pointed out that Crabbe introduces these "Golden Rules" into his "Parish Register."

Line 232. "The royal game of goose." Strutt, "Sports and Pastimes," IV. 2 (XXV.): "It is played upon a board with sixty-two compartments, and is called the game of goose because at every fourth and fifth compartment in succession a goose was depicted; and if the cast thrown by the player falls upon a goose, he moves forward double the number of his throw." It may be added that Scott mentions the game, "Waverley," Chap. III.: "The doctrines of arithmetic may, we are assured, be sufficiently acquired by spending a few hours a week at a new and complicated edition of the Royal Game of the Goose."

Line 236. "Chimney." Here, of course, fireplace.

Line 243. "The farmer's news." The farmer's necessary visits to the neighboring market-town would naturally make him the newsman. (Hales.)

Line 243. "The barber's tale." "The barber recounted a good many adventures that had happened to him since the one related, but, in my opinion, so little worth relating that I shall pass them over in silence." (Le Sage, "Gil Blas," Chap. XXV.) Barbers have ever been famed for too-ready tongues.

Line 244. "The woodman's ballad." The song of the huntsman.

Line 248. "The mantling bliss." The foaming cup—an instance of metonymy. Compare Pope, "And the brain dances to the mantling bowl," and Tennyson, "In Memoriam," CIV., "Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm." (Rolfe.) Note the use of the word in l. 132.

Line 250. "Kiss the cup." Hales compares Ben Jonson's "O, leave a kiss but in the cup" (Jonson's poem is from the Greek of Philostratus), and Dobson, Scott's "Young Lochinvar":—

The bride kissed the goblet, the knight took it up;
He quaffed off the wine and he threw down the cup."

Line 258. "Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined." This recalls Scott's familiar "Unwept, unhonored, and unsung." ("Lay of the Last Minstrel," VI.) The repetition of such negative participles is very common in English verse.

Line 259. "Pomp." In its original sense of "procession" or "pageant." Compare "Deserted Village," 317, "long-drawn pomps."

Lines 259 f. Goldsmith's description of the evils of wealth owes not a little to Thomson, "Liberty," V. 155 f.:—

"A wandering, tasteless, gaily wretched train,
Though rich, are beggars, and though noble, slaves.

Lo ! damned to wealth, at what a gross expense,
They purchase disappointment, pain and shame.

— Compare “Deserted Village,” 261–262.

Mark those disgraceful piles of wood and stone ;
Those parks and gardens.

— Compare “Deserted Village,” 276–277.

See ! the full bowl
That steams disgust, and bowls that give no joy.

— Compare “Deserted Village,” 263–264.

To tyrant fashion mark
The costly worship paid. . . .
With Midas’ ears they crowd ; or to the buz
Of masquerade unblushing.

— Compare “Deserted Village,” 259.

The fell, deputed tyrant who devours
The poor and weak at distance from redress.

— Compare “Deserted Village,” 275–276.

However puffed with power and gorged with wealth
A nation be ; let trade enormous rise,
Let East and South their mingled treasure pour,
Till, swell’d impetuous, the corrupting flood
Burst o’er the city and devour the land.”

— Compare “Deserted Village,” 269–275.

Line 268. “Between a splendid and a happy land.” Prior quotes “The Citizen of the World,” Letter XXV., “Too much commerce may injure a nation as well as too little ; and there is a wide difference between a conquering and a flourishing empire.”

Line 269. “Proud swells the tide.” “The idea apparently is that while more money comes into the country, it is received in return for necessities, some of which are needed for home use. As the money thus obtained goes to increase the luxury of the rich, it does not add to the substantial prosperity of the community as a whole. The actual product of the necessities of life remain the same ; and the rich man uses his superabundant wealth to encroach on the lands that once supplied the needs of the poor.” (Pancoast.)

Line 275. "The man of wealth and pride." "It is a melancholy thing to stand alone in one's country," said the Lord Leicester who built Holkham, when complimented on the completion of that princely dwelling. "I look around—not a house is to be seen but mine. I am the giant of Giant-castle, and have eat up all my neighbors." (Forster, "Life," II. 201.)

Line 287. "Fair female." The women in the novels of one hundred years ago—notably those of Fanny Burney and Jane Austen—are always spoken of as "females." Compare "Deserted Village," l. 326.

Line 288. "Secure to please." Confident of pleasing.

Line 293. "Solicitous to bless." Anxious to charm.

Line 295. "Thus fares the land." Compare "Deserted Village," l. 51.

Line 297. "Verging to decline." Absolute participle.

Line 308. "The bare-worn common." Pancoast explains this by two interesting references: "No less than seven hundred Enclosure Acts were passed between 1760 and 1774. The old common fields were beginning to disappear and the working classes also lost their right of pasturing cattle on the wastes, for the wastes were enclosed." (Gibben, "Industrial History of England," 153.) "Districts once covered with small arable farms were turned into immense pastures, and there were complaints that a single man monopolized a tract which had formerly supported twelve or fourteen industrious families. Whole families which had depended on free pasture land and fuel dwindled and perished, and a stream of emigrants passed to America." (Lecky, "History of England in the 18th Century," VI. 202.)

Line 312. "To pamper luxury and thin mankind." Here Goldsmith was mistaken. Population does not decrease with gains in wealth.

Line 313. "These joys." First edition, "each joy."

Line 316. "Artist." Artisan or mechanic.

Line 318. "The black gibbet." "The gallows, under the savage penal laws of the last century, by which horse-stealing, forgery, shoplifting, and even the cutting of a hop-bind in a plantation, were punishable with death, was a frequent object in the landscape." (Dobson.) Dr. Johnson says in his "London," 1738, 238-239:—

"Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn die,
With hemp the gallows and the fleet supply."

Line 319. "Dome." See "The Traveller," l. 159.

Line 322. "Torches." In these days, when there were no street lamps, torches were borne before foot-travellers by "link-boys."

Line 326. "The poor houseless shivering female." "A City Night Piece," "The Bee," Oct. 27. 1759; "The Citizen of the World," Letter CXVI.: "These poor shivering females have once seen happier days and been flattered into beauty Perhaps now lying at the doors of their betrayers ("Deserted Village," 332) they sue to wretches whose hearts are insensible, or debauchees who may curse but will not relieve them." (Mitford.) Goldsmith's sympathy with such sufferers was practical as well as poetic. On one occasion he left the whist-table to relieve an "unfortunate woman in the street, whom he heard half-singing, half-sobbing." "Her voice," he said, "grated painfully on my ear and jarred my frame." (Irving, "Goldsmith," Chap. XXXV.)

Line 330. "Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn." "Goldsmith wrote in a pre-Wordsworthian age, when even in the realm of poetry a primrose was not much more than a primrose; but it is doubtful whether, either before, during, or since Wordsworth's time, the sentiment that the imagination can infuse into the common things around us ever received more happy expression than in this well-known line." (Black, "Life of Goldsmith," 120.)

Lines 341 f. Thomson, "Liberty," V. 638-646, gives a very different picture of the Georgia of this time: —

"Lo ! swarming southward on rejoicing sons
Gay colonies extend ; the calm retreat
Of undeserved distress, the better home
Of those whom bigots chase from foreign lands,
Not built on rapine, servitude and woe,
And in their turn some petty tyrant's prey ;
But, bound by social freedom, firm they rise ;
Such as, of late, an Oglethorpe has form'd
And crowding round, the charm'd Savannah sees."

Line 342. "Convex." A common classical epithet of "world" ("mundus"). It appears in both Cicero and Pliny.

Line 344. "Altama." A river in Georgia—usually called the Altamaha—of which Goldsmith may have heard his friend, General Oglethorpe, speak.

Line 352. "Death." Venom.

Line 355. "Tigers." There were no tigers in Georgia; perhaps, as Rolfe suggests, the poet has the jaguar in mind. But the whole

scene is far more tropical than truthful. In "The Citizen of the World," Letter XVII., Goldsmith makes the "insidious tiger" a native of the backwoods of Canada.

Line 359. "Far different these from every former scene." Thomson, too, contrasts ("Liberty," V. 32 f.) the quiet fields, downs, and gardens of England with lands worried by serpent, tiger, and wolf.

Line 378. "A father's." First edition, "Her father's."

Line 384. "In all the silent manliness of grief." Defoe has the same idea in his "Journal of the Plague Year," 1722, "He mourned heartily, as it was easy to see, but with a kind of masculine grief that could not give itself vent by tears." The first edition reads "decent" — the change has greatly strengthened the line.

Line 386. "Things like these." The joys of home life in the village.

Line 399. "Anchoring." Lying at anchor.

Line 402. "Pass from the shore and darken all the strand." "He seems to distinguish between *shore* and *strand*, making *strand* mean the beach, the shore in the most limited sense of the word." (Hales.) Drayton, too, draws such a distinction in his "Ode to the Virginian Voyage."

Line 413. "Thou [Poetry] source of all my bliss and all my woe." Goldsmith had written to his brother Henry, in 1759, "Poetry is a much easier and more agreeable species of composition than prose, and could a man live by it, it were no unpleasant employment to be a poet." Later, he said to Lord Lisburn (Forster, "Life," II. 209), "I cannot afford to court the draggle-tail muses, they would let me starve; but by my other labours I can make shift to eat and drink and have good clothes."

Line 418. "Torno." Lake Tornea in Northern Sweden, or perhaps a river Tornea that empties into the Gulf of Bothnia. "Pambamarca," a mountain in South America, near Quito.

Line 428. "As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away." Mole is a bulwark or breakwater. The figure reversed is used to close Thomson's "Liberty" (V. 715-716) :—

"And by the proud imperious mole repelled,
Hark ! how the baffled storm indignant roars."

Strange to say, Dr. Johnson, who claimed this line — indeed the last four lines — of "The Deserted Village," declares in his "Life of Thomson," written many years after 1770: "'Liberty,' when it first appeared, I tried to read and soon desisted. I have never tried again, and therefore, will not hazard either praise or censure."

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

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BY
ROBERT BURNS

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NOTE

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INTRODUCTION.

ROBERT BURNS was born on Monday, January 25, 1759, in the humble cot still standing near Alloway Kirk on the road that leads from Ayr to the Brig o' Doon. The 'auld clay biggin' was built by Burns's father, William Burness, or Burnes, a true type of that sturdy Scotch peasantry which set great store by education and were deeply imbued with a personal and reverential sense of religion. His wife, Agnes Brown, whose devotion to her children was repaid by their unswerving love and filial protection, was a woman of strong intellect and character, and, though she had less education than her husband, she fully matched him in piety.

The humble home was not unhappy. The father was busily employed in the daily tasks on his farm, and the mother was fully occupied with the unceasing cares of her house and dairy and the more absorbing cares of her increasing family. Robert, somewhat stubborn, and peculiarly pious, began the cultivation of his memory and other mental faculties at the little school at Alloway Miln, but continued his education to better advantage after his father had moved to Mount Oliphant. It is true that their stay here of eleven years was "one long sore battle ending in defeat," but the boy nevertheless was learning much. His grave and thoughtful demeanor gave no promise of the rol-

licking and reckless mirth that was to mark him later. More wonderful still, the most musical of Britain's songsters had in these boyhood days an untunable voice and an ear so dull as with difficulty to distinguish one melody from another. But he was fond of good reading, and his taste must have been carefully cultivated, for the first compositions in which he took pleasure were Addison's "Vision of Mirza" and his hymn, "How are thy servants blest, O Lord!"

This literary preference may suggest that the "idiot piety" which possessed him led him early to reflections upon death and the fortunes of this world. His love for English writings, however, was not to be compared with his patriotic devotion, partly hereditary and partly cultivated, to the traditions and songs of Auld Scotland. To his mother, whose memory was charged with ballad and story, he owed much; for even more poetic material he was indebted to an ignorant, superstitious, and garrulous old woman who regaled him with tales of night and mystery, of dragon-guarded towers and bewitched kirkyards, of ghosts, fairies, kelpies, and warlocks. While his imagination was growing strong in its constant exercise of weaving living pictures out of this fancifully chaotic material, his body was weakened by the overstraining labor to which the poor, unkind soil of the farm subjected him with the rest. From those days date the weakness of his heart and his incipient despondency. Yet there was much pleasure, too, for Ayr was an open market for so social a disposition as his. His bright intelligence won him friends, not only among those whom his cheery nature and bright

chat could beguile, but also among those who could befriend him with books and counsel. The harvest days, too, were often joyous, for in the whitened field worked man and maiden, paired. It was his partner, Handsome Nell, that first inspired him to sing. "When the tones of her voice thrilled his heartstrings like an *Æolian* harp," the lad found his voice, too, and uttered that prelude to the unbroken series of love songs to which in large part he owed his fame.

Times were hard; the farm was poor; the boys worked faithfully, but to little purpose, while the father, sadly broken by his long struggle, was now harassed by misfortune. Another move was necessary, and soon the family was settled at Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, best known to us by its lassies whom Robert Burns has glorified. The lad of eighteen had now learned to fit words to melody and had thus reunited music and poetry. It would be interesting to conjecture whether with conscious aim he was impelled to join to these two their other erring sister, dancing. An easier explanation of his dancing lessons is his own. He was now almost a man, a beau among the peasant belles, who may have coyly snickered now and then at his clouterly appearance and his unpolished deportment. He must needs give his manners a "brush." Innocent love-making was now his chief recreation in the midst of farm duties, but in the idle summer-time he went to Kirkoswald to study surveying. Alas! his male associates there were not as innocent as the "TARBOLTON LASSES." His improved manners were the veneering of morals less improved.

Escape from bad companionship, on the one hand, and from pointless trifling on the other, seemed promised in his serious desire to marry Ellison Begbie, whom, years afterward, when he passed in review all the fine ladies he had met, he declared to have been best suited to form an agreeable companion through life. She rejected him. The confidant of half the love stories of Tarbolton now had a love story of his own, that he felt little like telling, for he was chagrined, sadly disappointed, and dejected. The sorely disheartened poet was afflicted with hypochondria, which for the time cast a gloom over all he wrote. In such a mood, little fitted to meet and resist insidious evil, he went to Irvine to learn flax-dressing; but, in addition, learned from a sailor lad, a hapless son of misfortune, easy lessons in vice. Burns was of a household of deep-rooted and consecrated virtues. These virtues, once sacredly enshrined in his own heart, were now irreverently handled. The hesitancy of prudent fear was soon overcome by the violence of passions against which his weak will was no safeguard. By those whom he admired he was easily swayed to imitation, and by those who admired him, readily encouraged to excesses.

The flax-shop venture was a failure. The deceit of his partner was followed almost immediately by the burning of the shop, just as Burns and his friends were giving a welcoming carousal to the new year. Dissipation and disaster, his present devils, followed him into his ensuing attack of constitutional melancholy. His brother Gilbert, younger in years, but by his steadiness, good sense, and sobriety the exact complement of his aimless, "hair-brained," and reck-

less brother, leased for both of them the Mossiel farm. This was done in anticipation of the impending death of their father, which would of necessity cause a crisis in the family affairs.

Around the death-bed of the father gathered the family. The patriarch's thoughts were not of himself, but of his children's future. For that of one of them he expressed soulful anxiety. Robert asked the self-accusing question, "Is it I?" but knew the answer before the assenting nod. The watchful sire had long since noted the brilliancy and promise of his eldest boy, but he had seen as well the innate strength of his passionate nature and his want of the balancing strength of a resolute will. The beginnings of a tragedy of life were in these qualities, particularly when taken in connection with the tears that welled up from his sensitive soul, which his father's fears had moved to remorse. The sting of a delicately sensitive conscience is sharp in a soul subject to remorseful and melancholy despondency.

Burying their father in Alloway Kirkyard and pausing in Lochlea only long enough to save from the ruins of his shattered fortunes the paltry sum that would meagerly stock their farm, the sons were soon settled at Mossiel with their widowed mother and their brothers and sisters.

It was in the next years when Burns, by no particular fault of his own, was failing as a farmer, that he discovered his frailty as a man and locally established his fame as a poet. His reputation as a poet could be safely rested on a period of six months (November 1785 to April 1786) during which he wrote among many other poems: "To a

Mouse," "Halloween," "Man Was Made to Mourn," "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "The Jolly Beggars," "The Twa Dogs," "The Unco Guid," and "To a Mountain Daisy."

He fully realized now his destiny as a poet and made no secret of his desire for fame. But he became notorious before he became famous. He was married to Jean Armour in the "fatal spring" of 1786, but the marriage was irregular. Through the dark storm of church opprobrium that thickened around the poet's head flashed the lightning ire of Jean's outraged father. Despondency bordering on madness led first to revolt and then to a resolution to leave Scotland for Jamaica. To put this resolution into effect he must first put his poems into print, that from their limited sale among his friends he might raise the necessary sum. Toward the end of July the volume appeared. At once the fame of this "maker of rhymes" filled his own circle and echoed in Edinburgh. The call to this Athens of the West was now stronger than the summons to Jamaica. He answered it in November. But he was a sadder if not a wiser man now, for into his life had entered another experience that cast its shadow forward on his path with darkness deepening on every anniversary of its occurrence. On the rebound from the deep dejection into which the whole unhappy affair with Jean, including her seeming faithlessness, had thrown him, his heart was enthralled by Mary Campbell. They met at the brook near the river Ayr and, standing upon opposite sides, first washed their hands as for some solemn rite, and then with their hands upon a Bible held above the pure flowing water, plighted

eternal troth. There were solemn verses concerning the sacredness of vows inscribed in this Bible and underneath them their united names were written. The scene was impressive despite its artificially dramatic character. Mary's faithful heart turned toward her lover; in October she set out to visit him, was stricken with fever on the way and died at Greenock. Burns was condemned in the depths of his soul where his faithlessness was known, and in that dark corner Remorse now took her abiding seat. Silence sealed the simple story, for Burns was sensitive, tender, and kind, but through many a song its sad memories found an outlet.

In Edinburgh, after a day or so of quiet observation, he became the observed of all observers. He was greeted by the learned as a genius, hailed as a wonder by the sensational, but loved by the lowly, whose pleasures led him to their taverns and their convivial living. His manly, frank bearing in the midst of the great, his self-poise in society for which he had no training but that of manly independence, increased his popularity. Burns was not deceived. He had watched the ebb following the inflowing tide. His purpose in coming to Edinburgh was primarily to bring out another edition of his poems. This appeared in April, 1787, but Creech, his publisher, was slow in settling, and the poet was thus forced into idle and aimless waiting. In the summer and autumn he gratified his love of scenery by journeyings through the Highlands and the Borderlands, but "embittering remorse was scaring his fancy at the gloomy forebodings of death." His journeys brought him to Ayrshire, where bonny Jean

awaited him as of yore, but where the servile compliance of father Armour, who was now flattered by so famous a son-in-law, literally drove the poet to studying Milton's "Satan." At Mossgiel he was encircled by the proud love of his own kin, into whose plans he entered. By attentions and presents he admitted them all into a full interest in his reviving fortunes. He returned to Edinburgh, where he was confined to his room for several months, by an accident due to an upset carriage, but even after his recovery the settlement for the poems was still delayed.

The second winter in Edinburgh had not been a great social success. The plummet of Burns's good sense had soon found the shallow bottom of this transient personal popularity. He left the city in the spring. Five hundred pounds was the proceeds of his book. He had used up £120 in idleness and travelling, £180 he gave to his brother Gilbert for the support of the family, £200 was left with which to found a home. With sad and embittered feelings he turned away from the shallow though not insincere appreciation of the capital to the home circle and his faithful Jean. He leased Ellisland—"a poet's, not a farmer's choice"—and in a short while had gathered around him his own. He was quieter and more calm. His old dream of a home of his own seemed realized, but his money was nearly gone. His was the problem of the "superlatively damned," as he described it, "to make one guinea do the business of three." The rally of the man was but temporary. Forebodings of failure compelled him to seek other and more remunerative duties. By the favor of his friends—whose friendship, however,

went strangely “agley”—he was made an exciseman. Week by week he rode his circuit of two hundred miles, whiling the solitary hours of his lonely rides by crooning songs and warming the cockles of his heart at every inn where his vivacious and sparkling conversation made him a welcome visitor. His leniency, his liveliness, and his loyalty to Scotland won him friends everywhere, who found open the door to his cottage, situated too conveniently, about six miles from Dumfries and on the highway from Glasgow to England. That house was poor indeed, then, that could not furnish the cheering glass, and there was much show of conviviality in Burns’s home. The cheerfulness was superficial. To the hopelessness of his neglected farming was now added the “groaning under the miseries of a diseased nervous system.” His October depressions and despondency turned his soul, it is true, to “Mary in Heaven,” but they turned his restless and unsatisfied mind to the delusive consolations of the Globe Tavern in Dumfries.

Poetry was still his chosen, nay, rather God-given, vocation; the uncongenial duties of the exciseman but a necessary avocation until he could attain the “summit of his wishes,” “a life of literary leisure with a decent competency.” There was little hope now that he would ever obtain his desire, for the periods of rest that fell between the regular and faithful discharge of his duties, were largely given to congenial but unprofitable companions. Partly, perhaps, to be more convenient to them, but more because some change was imperative since £300 had already been sunk in the Ellisland venture, he determined to move to Dumfries. The remaining years were feverish

and fatal. Poor failing Robbie was losing his reputation, so dear to a Scotchman, and losing too, his own approval of himself. He knew “self-contempt bitterer to drink than death.”

From his faithful wife he would turn to pointless and compromising love making with “Clarinda.” Often he resigned the homage due to lyric kingship, which he held by divine right, to be cajoled with the adulations paid by lax and lazy subjects to their prince of good fellows. Restless in soul and body, he made himself a part of the revolution of his day and dabbled in politics, not more because of his love of the people, than because of his hate of the self-satisfied aristocracy. The poet was tender and true in his poesy, the solace of his sinking fortunes, but the man in his moods was often satirical and petulant. “I shun now the gay crowds I used to love,” he writes; but it was because he could not find there the sympathy and comfort he craved. Humiliation and self-reproach anon clogged the upward flight of his song, but only for a time. Then song followed song. On New Year’s day of 1795 he gave to the world the best expression in verse of the individual worth of manhood, of which he might under other circumstances have made so much more.

In October he was ill, but in January of 1796 far better. By exposure he was made sick again, but he did not lose hope until spring found him still ailing. In the early summer his health continued to decline, but he was self-possessed and chiefly concerned about his posthumous fame. Sea bathing was tried with merely transient effect, and on July 18 he was brought home to die. He lingered

several days, frequently delirious, and passed away on July 21, in the middle of the summer, which was almost the midsummer of his life according to the time allotted by the Psalmist.

The large crowd of mighty and menial that gathered around the Town Hall where his remains lay, or lined the streets and fell in behind the lengthening procession that followed his body to the grave in St. Michael's Churchyard was but emblematic of the almost unceasing procession since that day to the spot where Robert Burns lies in the bosom of his beloved country.

The evil and the good that war continually in man, fought many a fierce battle in this honest bosom. When good prevailed a victorious song burst upon the air, and old Scotland's melodies were graced with words more beautiful than of yore; when evil had its way there might have been the laughter of the crowd, the unrestrained mirth of his own self-abandonment in joyous verse, but there often followed sadness, sorrow, and remorse, which found, too, their expression at times in his poetry.

To-day, amid the thousands who throng his birthplace or his grave, there are those whose tuneful ears are enraptured with his music; those whose aspiring souls are caught in the upward flight of his soaring genius; those whose human hearts beat with deep commiseration for his pathetic sufferings; those who share his patriotism or glory in his brotherhood with all created things; but there are those, too, who know mainly of his follies and his foibles. Some hail him again as the minister of mirth, others acclaim him a priest in the inner sanctuary of song.

Written probably in November, 1785, this poem owed its origin to the vivid picture Burns carried with him of his patriarchal father leading the family devotions and to the peculiarly venerable phrase he used, "Let us worship God." The central thought of the poem then is autobiographical, but the details of the picture are imaginary.

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure ;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor."

— GRAY.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

I.

My loved, my honour'd, much respected friend,
No mercenary bard his homage pays :
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end :
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and
praise :
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene ;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways ;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been ;
Ah ! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there,
I ween.

II.

course of
events.

labor.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sough ;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close ;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh ;
The black'ning trains o' crows to their repose :
The toil-worn cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hame-
ward bend.

III.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
 Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
 Th' expectant wee things toddlin, stacher thro'
 To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise and
 glee. stagger.
fluttering.

His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily, shining.
 His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's
 smile,

The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
 Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile, anxiety.
 And makes him quite forget his labour and his
 toil.

IV.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in, by and by.
 At service out amang the farmers roun',
 Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin drive.
 A cannie errand to a neibor town;
 Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
 In youthfu' bloom, love sparklin' in her e'e,
 Comes hame, perhaps, to show a bra' new gown,
 Or deposit her sair-won penny fee,
 To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be. attentively.

V.

With joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
 And each for other's welfare kindly spiers; inquires.
 The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
 Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears; news.
 The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
 Anticipation forward points the view,
 The mother, wi' her needle and her shears,
 Gars auld claes look amaint as weel's the new;
 The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

VI.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
 The younkers a' are warnèd to obey ;
 And mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
 And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play ;
 "And oh ! be sure to fear the Lord alway !
 And mind your duty, duly, morn and night !
 Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
 Implore His counsel and assisting might :
 They never sought in vain that sought the Lord
 aright !"

VII.

But, hark ! a rap comes gently to the door,
 Jenny wha kens the meaning o' the same,
 Tells how a neibor lad cam o'er the moor,
 To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
 The wily mother sees the conscious flame
 Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek,
 Wi' heart-struck auxious care, inquires his name,
 While Jenny haflins is afraid to speak ;
 Weel pleased the mother hears it's nae wild
 worthless rake.

VIII.

in. Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben ;
 A strappin youth ; he takts the mother's e'e ;
 Blithe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en ;
 The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
 The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
 But blate and lathefu' scarce can weel behave ;
 The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy

tells. bashful, hesitating.

What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae
grave;
Weel pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like
the lave.

others.

IX.

Oh happy love! — where love like this is found!
Oh heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare, —
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure
spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the
ev'ning gale."

X.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth! —
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distract-
tion wild?

XI.

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief of Scotia's food;
The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:

cow.
wall.

well saved,
cheese,
strong.

flax bloom.

hall-bible.

gray tem-
ples.

chooses.

feeds.

The dame brings forth, in complimentary mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell,
And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid ;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the
bell.

XII.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide ;
The sire, turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride ;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare ;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care ;
And "Let us worship God !" he says, with solemn air.

XIII.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim :
Perhaps "Dundee's" wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name,
Or noble "Elgin" beets the heaven-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays :
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame ;
The tickl'd ear no heart-felt raptures raise ;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

XIV.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high ;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny ;

Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
 Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
 Or Job's pathetic plaint and wailing cry;
 Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
 Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

xv.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
 How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
 How He who bore in Heaven the second name,
 Had not on earth whereon to lay His head:
 How His first followers and servants sped,
 The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
 How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
 Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
 And heard great Bab'l'on's doom pronounced by
 Heaven's command.

xvi.

Then kneeling down, to HEAVEN'S ETERNAL KING,
 The saint,¹ the father, and the husband prays:
 Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"²
 That thus they all shall meet in future days;
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,
 In such society, yet still more dear,
 While circling time moves round in an eternal
 sphere.

¹ Note the epitaph on William Burns.

² From Pope's "Windsor Forest."

XVII.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
 In all the pomp of method and of art,
 When men display to congregations wide,
 Devotion's ev'ry grace except the heart!
 The power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
 The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ;
 But haply, in some cottage far apart,
 May hear well pleas'd the language of the soul,
 And in His book of life the inmates poor enroll.

XVIII.

Then homeward all take off their several way ;
 The youngling cottagers retire to rest :
 The parent pair their secret homage pay,
 And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
 That He, who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
 And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
 Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
 For them and for their little ones provide ;
 But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine
 preside.

XIX.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur
 springs,
 That makes her loved at home, rever'd abroad :
 Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
 "An honest man's the noblest work of God ;"¹
 And certes, in fair virtue's heav'nly road,
 The cottage leaves the palace far behind.
 What is a lordling's pomp ? a cumbrous load,
 Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
 Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd !

¹ From Pope's "Essay on Man."

XX.

O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !
 For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent !
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
 Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet
 content !
 And, O ! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
 From luxury's contagion weak and vile !
 Then, how'er crowns and coronets be rent,
 A virtuous populace may rise the while,
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd
 isle.

XXI.

O Thou who pour'd the patriotic tide
 That streamed through Wallace's undaunted
 heart,
 Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
 Or nobly die, the second glorious part, —
 The patriot's God peculiarly Thou art,
 His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward !
 O never, never, Scotia's realm desert ;
 But still the patriot and the patriot's bard
 In bright succession raise, her ornament and
 guard !

ANALYSIS OF THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

- I. Dedication to Robert Aiken of Ayr, to whom Burns gave the credit of having "read him into fame," so well did he interpret the poet.
- II. *Picture First.* The toil-worn Cotter returning home at the end of a bleak November Saturday.
- III. *Picture Second.* The welcome by bairns and thrifty wifie in his lonely cot.
- IV. *Picture Third.* The home-gathering of the children from their weekly labors.

- V. *Picture Fourth.* The social group telling of the week's happenings.
- VI. The father's admonition to (1) obedience ; (2) diligence ; (3) fidelity ; (4) fear of the Lord ; (5) duty as a means of avoiding temptation ; (6) prayer.
- VII. *Picture Fifth.* The arrival of Jenny's lover.
- VIII. *Picture Sixth.* The embarrassed lover kindly received.
- IX. Author's rhapsody of true love.
- X. Author's denunciation of false love.
- XI. *Picture Seventh.* The supper.
- XII. *Picture Eighth.* Preparation for devotions opened by the father's "Let us worship God."
- XIII. Devotion continued ; song from the heart.
- XIV. Devotion continued ; lesson from the Old Testament.
 - For example (1) Abram, friend of God.
 - (2) Moses against Amalek.
 - (3) David under God's ire.
 - (4) Job's plaint.
 - (5) Isaiah's seraphic fire.
 - (6) Other prophets.
- XV. Devotion continued. Perhaps the lesson is from the New Testament.
 - For example (1) Crucifixion of Christ. } Gospels.
 - (2) Christ's poverty.
 - (3) Acts of the Apostles.
 - (4) Epistles.
 - (5) Revelation.
- XVI. Devotion continued. The saint, father, and husband prays.
- XVII. Author contrasts this rich worship with the pomp of poor Religion's pride.
- XVIII. *Picture Ninth.* Separation, with parents' closet prayer.
- XIX. Author finds in such scenes the sources of Scotia's greatness, and affirms the cot's supremacy in virtue over the palace.
- XX. Apostrophe to Scotia and a prayer for the blessings of health, peace, and sweet content and freedom from luxury's contagion.
- XXI. Prayer to God not to desert Scotia but to preserve her patriotism.

This beautiful idyl presents a most perfect poetical picture of the sturdy, religious, yeoman life of Scotland.

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

BY

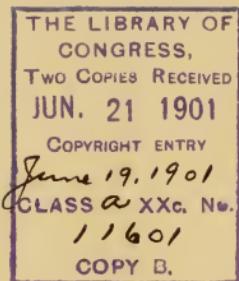
THOMAS GRAY

1

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES



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INTRODUCTION.

An elegy is a poem or a song which expresses sorrow and mourning, or in which the subject or sentiment is of a solemn or serious character. Naturally such compositions are common in all languages, for sorrow is inseparable from the lot of man, and poetry is the language of the emotions.

The literature of our English tongue, rich as it is in poetry of every class, contains many fine examples of elegy, but there is one which stands so high above all the others that it necessarily comes first to the mind, at least of an educated English-speaking person, when mention is made of this species of writing. We can hardly, indeed, conceive the idea of an elegy without instantly thinking of Gray's immortal poem, "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," popularly known as "Gray's Elegy," — a designation which seems to assign to it the preëminence it has held almost since its first appearance, and will doubtless hold as long as the English language exists.

This may seem too high praise, but it is scarcely higher than the sober judgment of the best judges. Lord Byron, himself one of the greatest of poets, said that if Gray had written nothing but the Elegy, it would have established his fame as a poet. The praise or tribute of General Wolfe is of special interest to American boys and girls, because it is connected with glorious events in the history of their own country. What is known as the French and Indian War ended in the surrender of Quebec after the famous battle on the Plains of Abraham, in which the heroic Wolfe was mortally wounded. On the night before the battle, Wolfe, de-

scending the river St. Lawrence with a portion of his army, recited “Gray’s Elegy” in a company of his officers, under circumstances which Lord Mahon in his History of England thus describes: —

“Swiftly, but silently, did the boats fall down with the tide, unobserved by the enemy’s sentinels at their posts along the shore. Of the soldiers on board, how eagerly must every heart have throbbed at the coming conflict; how intently must every eye have contemplated the dark outline, as it lay pencilled upon the midnight sky, and as every moment it grew closer and clearer, of the hostile heights! Not a word was spoken — not a sound beyond the rippling of the stream. Wolfe alone — thus tradition has told us — repeated in a low tone to the other officers in his boat those beautiful stanzas with which a country churchyard inspired the muse of Gray. One noble line: —

“ ‘The paths of glory lead but to the grave,’ must have seemed at such a moment fraught with mournful meaning. At the close of the recitation Wolfe added: ‘Now, gentlemen, I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec.’ ”

This was in 1759. The “Elegy” had been first published only eight years before — in 1751. In a comparatively short time it had become a classic of English literature. But its fame was not confined to English-speaking countries. Through translations into German, French, Italian, and Portuguese it became known and admired over the greater part of Europe. Translations were also made into Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.

Now, we ought to know some of the reasons why this poem has been so much praised and is so universally admired. Perhaps we cannot better try to know than by inquiring what are the qualities that make a poem beautiful. One of the answers to this question is suggested by what

the great poet Shakespeare says about playing on the stage, when he tells us that its purpose is “To hold the mirror up to nature.” Now in a mirror we see the exact image of things, and a poem, like the mirror, ought to give us a true representation of what it proposes to tell us about. When we look at a picture of a tree or a landscape, we begin to think whether it is like a real tree or landscape, and the nearer it is to being so, the more it pleases us, for the more perfect and beautiful it is. So with a poem; to be beautiful it must be true to nature—not overcolored or overdrawn, but just as the object or subject treated of is in reality.

Applying this test to “Gray’s Elegy,” we must indeed admit that it “holds the mirror up to nature.” One of the highest literary authorities, Dr. Samuel Johnson, said of it that “it abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo.” And in these words we are reminded of another attraction of the poem. Its subject—the grave, with its solemn and melancholy associations and suggestions—is one of universal interest. The “inevitable hour” of death awaits all men, regardless alike of their glory or power or wealth, as the “Elegy” expresses it so perfectly and beautifully:—

“ The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth’ e’er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour:—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

Still another beauty of the “Elegy” is the harmony of its structure and melodious flow of its words and lines. This charm of the poem is well exemplified in one of its most frequently quoted stanzas:—

“ Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

Further features of the poem calling for special attention are dealt with in the explanatory and analytical notes at the end of the text; but here we must add some particulars of the life of the man to whom we are indebted for this priceless literary treasure.

Thomas Gray was born in London in 1716. His father, Philip Gray, was in good circumstances, but he ill-treated and neglected his family, and the care of the boy's education was left to his mother, an excellent woman, whose affection and solicitude were well repaid by her son's tender love and affection to the end of her life.

At the age of eleven young Gray was sent to Eton, then, as now, one of the great grammar schools for the sons of wealthy Englishmen. Here he remained seven years, and then went to the University of Cambridge, where he was a student until 1738. Among his college acquaintances was the celebrated Horace Walpole, author of many literary works, chiefly political and historical. With Walpole as companion, Gray travelled in France and Italy for a couple of years, visiting places of note, and writing in admirable style his views and impressions on everything he saw that was worthy of observation.

Shortly after his return to England, in 1741, his father died, and his mother, who had no children living but Thomas, went to reside with two sisters at Stoke Pogis, a village near Windsor, on the Thames. Here her son often visited her, he himself having taken up his residence at his old quarters, Peterhouse College, Cambridge, where, until his death in 1771, he spent most of his time, enjoying the pleasures of literary surroundings and companionship.

It is said that it was the churchyard of Stoke Pogis, where the bones of his mother and himself were afterward laid to rest, that Gray had in mind when he wrote the "Elegy," but the descriptions and references in the poem

apply equally to scores of English churchyards. Every parish in England has a church (Protestant Episcopal), known as the parish church, and around it is a "yard," or a piece of ground, which is the parish cemetery — the burying-place of the common people, where, as we read in the poem, —

"The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

Gray's first work as a poet was in 1742. In that year he wrote his "Ode to Spring," the "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," and the "Ode on Adversity." In the same year he began his "Elegy." He did not finish it, however, in that year, and it was not until the winter of 1749 that he resumed the work. The poem was completed in June of the next year. As we have already remarked, it became quickly popular. Eleven editions of it were printed and sold within two years. This success surprised the author, but it brought no money profit to him, as he had made a gift of the copyright to the publisher. Strange to say, he himself had no conception of the real merit of the poem which so soon became the delight and the pride of his countrymen.

Of his many other poetic productions, — all of them of high merit, — few are familiar to readers of the present day. The fame of Thomas Gray stands, and will stand for all time, on the immortal "Elegy in a Country Church-yard."

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day;
The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea;
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight 5
And all the air a solemn stillness holds;
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain 10
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a moldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid, 15
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees, the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield ; 25
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke :
 How jocund did they drive their team afield !
 How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil, 30
 Their homely joys and destiny obscure ;
 Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
 Await alike the inevitable hour : — 35
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
 If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
 Where, through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise. 40

Can storied urn or animated bust
 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
 Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
 Or Flattery soothe the dull, cold ear of Death ?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire :
 Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
 Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre :

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
 Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll : 50
 Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
 And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear :
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air. 55

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood, —
Some mute, inglorious Milton, here may rest, —
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood. 60

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade : nor circumscribed alone 65
Their growing virtues ; but their crimes confined ;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind ;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide ;
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame ; 70
Or heap the crime of luxury and pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray :
Along the cool, sequestered vale of life, 75
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial, still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,
 The place of fame and elegy supply ;
 And many a holy text around she strews,
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey, 85
 This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned ;
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
 Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind ?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies ;
 Some pious drops the closing eye requires : 90
 E'en from the tomb, the voice of nature cries ;
 E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of the unhonored dead,
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,
 If 'chance, by lonely contemplation led, 95
 Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate, —

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
 "Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn,
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn. 100

"There, at the foot of yonder nodding beech
 That wreathes its old, fantastic roots so high,
 His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
 And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn, 105
 Muttering his wayward fancies, he would rove ;
 Now, drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
 Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

“One morn I missed him on the 'customed hill,
 Along the heath, and near his favorite tree; 110
 Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he:

 “The next, with dirges due, in sad array,
 Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne:
 Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay 115
 Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.”

THE EPITAPH.

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
 A youth to fortune and to fame unknown;
 Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth;
 And melancholy marked him for her own. 120

 Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere;
 Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
 He gave to misery all he had, a tear;
 He gained from heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No further seek his merits to disclose, 125
 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
 (There they alike in trembling hope repose)
 The bosom of his Father and his God.

NOTES.

Line 1. "Curfew." In the Middle Ages (from the eighth to the fifteenth century) houses in many of the towns of Europe were made of wood, with a hole in the floor for a fireplace, and an opening in the roof to let out the smoke. Such houses easily caught fire, and to guard against this danger during the night, there was a law that all fires and domestic lights should be put out on the ringing of a bell at a certain hour in the evening, the hour in England being eight o'clock. The fires were put out by covering them up, and so the bell was called "Curfew," from the French, *couver*, to cover and *feu*, fire, French being the language of the Normans, who, it is said, introduced the law into England. Though the Curfew was abolished centuries before the time of Gray, there was and still is in many European countries a practice of ringing a bell at a fixed hour every evening. But the introduction of the Curfew in the poem is merely a poetic revival of an old idea and an old word. "Knell," a bell rung after death, or during the passing of a funeral from the house of the dead person, or from the church, to the grave. "Parting day," departing or dying day; that is, the twilight. The use of the word "knell" in reference to parting day is not strictly correct, as the knell was rung, not at the time of parting or dying, but *after death*. Poets, however, are not held to hard and fast rules in the application of words. What is called "poetic license" authorizes usages that are not permitted to prose writers.

Line 3. Pupils will find an entertaining, and perhaps useful, exercise in the many transpositions that may be made in this line, such as, —

Homeward the weary plowman plods his way.
The weary plowman homeward plods his way.
The plowman weary homeward plods his way.
Homeward the plowman weary plods his way.
Weary the plowman homeward plods his way.
Homeward his way the weary plowman plods.

And many other forms, the same words being always used.

Line 4. "The world," meaning of course the part of the world in which he himself was. The poet is supposed as speaking or writing, after having entered the churchyard just at twilight, when it was getting dark.

Line 6. "Air" is the object, not the subject, of the verb "holds"; that is, a solemn stillness holds all the air.

Line 7. "The beetle," an insect also called the maybug or cock-chafer, common in Europe, which, as it flies around, makes a low humming sound or droning like that of a bee.

Line 8. "Drowsy tinklings." In many places where large numbers of sheep are kept, small bells are hung on their necks so that if any stray away from the flock, the shepherd knows by the sound or tinkling of the bells in what direction they have gone. The idea of the line is that the sheep in the folds are made drowsy, or are lulled to rest, by the tinkling of the little bells.

Line 10. "Moping," dull or stupid and melancholy. The owl is a melancholy bird and likes to be alone. It is often found in towers, old ruins, or deserted buildings.

Line 13. There is still in the churchyard of Stoke Pogis an old yew-tree under which the poet (Gray) often sat.

Line 14. "Where heaves the turf," where the turf or earth heaves, that is, rises, into small mounds or heaps.

Lines 15 and 16. "Each in his narrow cell," etc. These two lines are very frequently quoted. "The rude forefathers." Meaning the poor, the common people, who are referred to throughout the poem. The burying places of the rich are, in England, usually inside the church.

Line 19. "The cock's shrill clarion," — the crowing of the cock, or rooster, as the bird is commonly called in America. The clarion is a kind of trumpet the sound of which is sharp or shrill. "The echoing horn." The horn blown by huntsmen. Fox hunting was and still is a favorite sport of country gentlemen in England. In olden times they started out early in the morning, and the huntsman (the man having the direction or management of the game or sport) used a horn which he sounded to cheer on the dogs.

Line 20. "Their lowly bed." Some have thought that by "lowly bed" the poet meant the grave. This is a mistake. What is meant is the lowly or humble bed in their homes, from which they had been often roused early in the morning by the huntsman's horn.

Line 22. "Ply" in this line is an abbreviated form of "apply."

Line 25. "Sickle," a reaping-hook for cutting wheat or other grain.

Line 26. "Furrow," the narrow trench made by a plow as it is drawn along in the field by the horses. "Stubborn glebe," stiff, hard land or ground. "Broke," often, as, here used in poetry instead of the correct form "broken."

Line 27. "Afield," to the field.

Line 28. Referring to the cutting down of trees with an ax.

Lines 29-32. The thought and attention of the pupil should be directed to the fine sentiment of this beautiful stanza. "Ambition and Grandeur" are examples of the figure of speech called personification, by which things without life, or abstract ideas, are represented as human beings or *persons*. This is why the words begin with capital letters. "Toil and smile" do not make perfect rhyme, but such rhyme is not uncommon in the best poetry.

Lines 33-36. "The boast of heraldry." Heraldry is the science which records and tells about the history of titled families and their ensigns or coats-of-arms. In the United States we have no nobility, as it is called. All citizens are of the same rank before the law, but in England and other countries ruled by kings or emperors, there are dukes and earls and lords and barons. These are called the nobility or the aristocracy, and there are officers called heralds whose business it is to preserve the histories of those families and tell what are their proper badges or ensigns. The word "heraldry" in the poem may therefore be taken to mean noble birth or high family descent.

Line 37. "To these," meaning to the poor.

Lines 39, 40. In these lines reference is made to the places of burial of the noble and the wealthy inside magnificent church buildings "Fretted vault." Fretwork is a kind of ornament in architecture consisting of continuous lines, sometimes crossing each other at right angles, and sometimes formed in squares. "Pealing anthem," a hymn sung with organ accompaniment.

Line 41. "Storied urn," an urn or vase with pictures upon it representing events from stories or history. Urns are often to be seen as ornaments on tombs. "Animated bust," a bust so lifelike as almost to seem really breathing.

Line 42. The meaning is, Can the fleeting (dying) breath be called back to its mansion (the human breast) by grand ornaments on the tomb?

Line 43. "Provoke" here means to call forth. Can "Honor's voice," that is, titles of nobility, call the dead forth to life?

Line 45. Observe that the singular verb "is laid" has as its subject "heart" in the next line and "hands" in the next. This is a grammatical error, but it is allowed by poetic license.

Line 46. "Pregnant with celestial fire," filled with the heavenly fire or inspiration of poetry, meaning some one that might have been a great poet.

Line 47. "Rod of empire," the scepter or authority of a king or emperor.

Line 48. Hands that might have delighted and thrilled people by playing on the lyre.

Lines 49-52. "Knowledge and Penury," another example of personification. The lines mean that they had no opportunities of education and that cold poverty (chill penury) crushed their fervor or enthusiasm (noble rage).

Lines 53-56. The pupils should commit this beautiful and oft-quoted stanza to memory. Its implied meaning is that, as there are many brilliant gems buried in the depths of the ocean, and many beautiful flowers growing in uninhabited deserts, never seen by human eye, so there may be among the poor many whose natural talents are hidden from the world, or remain undeveloped because of poverty and ignorance.

Lines 57-60. John Hampden was a gentleman of property and member of Parliament who refused to pay the tax called ship money, arbitrarily imposed by King Charles I. John Milton was, next to Shakespeare, the greatest of English poets, and author of the famous epic poem, "Paradise Lost." Oliver Cromwell was one of the military leaders of the Puritan war in England which ended in the execution of Charles I. The stanza may be understood in this way: In some humble grave in the country churchyard may rest some one who, had he had the education and opportunities, might have been as bold a patriot as Hampden, or as great a poet as Milton, or as brave a soldier as Cromwell.

Lines 61-64. "Senates" in the first line means legislatures. The whole stanza is to be read or understood as if following the first three words in the next stanza. "Their lot forbade," the meaning being that the lot of such humble persons as those referred to in stanza, lines 57-60, forbade them, or made them unable, to command the applause of listening senates, or to despise the threats of pain and ruin, or (by great actions as statesmen) to scatter plenty over a smiling land, or to read their history in a nation's eyes; that is, to make themselves famous among their countrymen.

Lines 65-68. "Nor circumscribed alone," etc. The stanza is to be thus understood: The lot of the poor not alone circumscribed, that is limited or restrained, their growing virtues or abilities (virtues or abilities which might have grown), but it also, perhaps, confined or restrained their crimes, or prevented crimes which they might have committed had they been in higher stations in life. It (their lot) also forbade them to wade through slaughter to great power which they might have used tyrannically.

Lines 69-72. "Lot" and "forbade" are again to be understood in this stanza. The lot of the poor forbade them to hide or suppress the struggling pangs of truth, or to be shameless in doing bad actions. "Incense kindled at the Muse's flame." The "Muse" means the goddess of poetry, and the two last lines mean that the lot of the poor forbade them to write great poems in praise of luxury and pride.

Lines 73-74. The pupil's attention should be directed to the importance of the comma after "strife." If there were no comma or other point there, the sense of the two lines would be just the opposite of what the poet intended. The meaning is that the humble people referred to, having been far from the noisy crowds of the great cities, never had any desire or temptation to stray away from their quiet occupations in the country.

Lines 77-80. The stanza means: But even the poor have some simple memorials decked with uncouth rhymes (simple verses) and shapeless (not very skillful) sculpture. Such are to be seen in almost every cemetery.

Line 81. "Their years," their age. "The unlettered Muse," the uneducated writer of the simple verses on the tombs.

Line 83. "Many a holy text she strews." "She" refers to the Muse, the humble verse-writer. Texts of scripture and pious sentences relating to death are common on tombstones.

Line 84. "Teach the rustic moralist to die"; that is, to be resigned to death. By "rustic moralist" may be understood an humble countryman, who thinks and talks about morals and right living.

Lines 85-88. This has been considered a difficult stanza, but the meaning seems to be: Who has ever been such a prey to forgetfulness as to resign "this pleasing anxious being" — that is, this life — without casting a longing, lingering look behind?

Lines 89-92. The meaning is: At the moment of death every one longs for the affectionate remembrance of some dear friend. And even after death the yearning desire is still felt; even in our ashes the fires

of our home affection still live. Of course this is what may be called a poetic exaggeration — a conception of the poet's fancy or imagination.

Line 93. "For thee," referring to the poet himself.

Line 94. "These lines," the poem, the "Elegy."

Line 95. "If chance," if by chance.

Line 96. The poet supposes some "kindred spirit," that is some one of nature and character like his own, making inquiry about himself (the poet) after he is dead, and he supposes the answer to be given by a "hoary-headed swain" as in the five following stanzas.

Line 97. "Haply," perhaps. "Hoary-headed swain," an aged resident of the village.

Line 100. "Upland lawn," the slope of a hill.

Line 107. "Woeful wan," sad and pale.

Line 109. "The customed hill," the accustomed hill, the hill on which he had been so often seen.

Line 111. "Another came"; that is, another morn.

Line 113. "The next," the next morn. "Dirges due." A dirge is a mournful song. By "dirges due" is meant such dirges as were fitting or suitable for the occasion.

Line 114, the funeral procession.

Line 115. "For thou canst read." The old man himself could *not* read.

Line 116. "Graved," engraved. The old man points out to the stranger the epitaph or inscription on the tomb. In one of the earlier editions of the poem the following beautiful stanza appeared here — immediately after the stanza ending with line 116 :

"There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found ;
The red-breast loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

But the stanza was stricken out of the poem by the poet himself because it was "too long a parenthesis in this place." He thought it would be too much of an interruption at the place where the epitaph having been pointed out, the reader would naturally expect the epitaph itself to follow immediately.

Line 118. An oft-quoted line, "To fame unknown." These words at least would not be true of the poet after his death.

Line 119. "Science," knowledge in general. Knowledge is per-

sonified, and the meaning is that it looked with favor upon him, or was favorable to him.

Line 123. "To misery," to the poor, the unfortunate, or the unhappy. "A tear," his sympathy.

Lines 126-128. The meaning is: Do not seek to learn his frailties, since they are known to God alone. "In trembling hope," hope mingled with a little fear; hope that his frailties may be forgiven, yet not entirely free from anxiety.

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